MARGARET
SERGENT

REMINISCENCES OF A REGICIDE.

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SERGENT RECEIVING A LETTER FROM EMIRA WHILE IN HIDING IN 1795.

HR
S484

REMINISCENCES OF A REGICIDE

EDITED FROM THE ORIGINAL MSS. OF

SERGENT MARCEAU

MEMBER OF THE CONVENTION, AND ADMINISTRATOR OF POLICE IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION OF 1789

BY

M. C. M. SIMPSON

AUTHOR OF

"LETTERS AND RECOLLECTIONS OF JULIUS AND MARY MOHL"

"The only good histories are those written by the very people who were at the head of the movements described, or who, at any rate, took part in their conduct."—MONTAIGNE. (*Motto chosen by Sergent.*)

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL

LIMITED

1889

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39833
14/9/97

Richard Clay & Sons, Limited,
London & Bungay.

INTRODUCTION.

Towards the end of the month of October 1846, a few days after the floods which did so much damage to the communications between Marseilles and Nice, an English lady and gentleman were driving rapidly along the highway, when they were stopped by two persons, who commanded the postillions, in an authoritative tone, to turn aside from the road and follow one of them, adding: "My will is never questioned here." The postillions showed no inclination to dispute it, and without further ado, masters, servants, carriages, bag and baggage were carried off.

This fierce jailor, who proved to be no other than their distinguished and eccentric countryman, Lord Brougham, had heard that Mr. and Mrs. Davenport were expected at the hotel at Cannes, and determined to substitute his château for that hostelry, to the great satisfaction of every one except the good landlord, who would willingly have dispensed with such a formidable rival.

The travellers were treated with the utmost kindness by their despotic host, and were not allowed to move until the mischief caused by the inundations had been entirely repaired.

Among other visitors at the château they met M. Carnot, son of the celebrated Director (and father of the President of the French Republic), and learned from him that Sergent-Marceau, a leading man in the French Revolution, was living at Nice in the full possession of his health and faculties at past ninety years of age.

It was with great pleasure that they renewed their acquaintance with M. Carnot at Nice, and they accepted with alacrity his offer of an introduction to Sergent. The great age attained by him, and the extraordinary events in which he had been a conspicuous actor, were indeed enough to make Sergent an object of intense interest. With regard to his character, opinions differed widely. The Conservatives denounced him as a bloodthirsty thief and murderer, while those professing advanced opinions represented him as an honest, upright, benevolent old man.

Mr. Davenport determined to judge for himself, and the following is his account of the first visit, written down at the time :—

"We found Sergent in a poor and comfortless lodging, with a bad staircase, in chimneyless rooms, the inner one of which was a small closet looking towards the south, where the old Republican was sharing the bright sun with his canary-bird, looking as happy and contented as if they had been of the same age. His looks were full of energy, his features still handsome, his figure though somewhat bent strong and muscular, his voice as full and distinct as

the absence of teeth would permit. His manner and matter good-humoured, clear, elegant, and energetic, with a power of continuous speech which I never recollect to have heard equalled. For in the long and celebrated orations I have heard in Parliament, our speakers were aware of the value of frequent though but momentary pauses, which a late lamented wit used to call brilliant flashes of silence.[1] But Sergent's power needed no such economical husbanding; his sentences resembled Guicciardini's, with this difference, that Sergent could afford to dispense with stops, so that, in fact, his sentences equalled the chapters of the Italian; and, to do him justice, were as well composed, as lively and as clear as Guicciardini's elaborate periods. This extraordinary exhibition, in fact, could only have commanded the attention it deserved by the descriptive talent displayed, and the variety of information conveyed, sometimes in a very comic vein. In all my life I have met nothing like the powers I am endeavouring to describe.

"I trust that the knowledge of other particulars of Sergent's character will not prove unwelcome to those who, without reference to politics, respect inflexibility of principles. His whole life has been devoted to politics and the fine arts; the latter, indeed, are supposed to soften and elevate the mind —a rule, however, according to Sergent, not without

[1] Sidney Smith's description of Macaulay at Holland House.

an exception, for he says that while a young and beautiful woman was entreating the intercession of the painter David in favour of some near relation, this wretch was drawing the figure of a victim under execution, and dropped the sketch in sight of the suppliant at his feet; and it is well known that this artist made the butcheries of the Revolutionary Tribunal the subject of his own works.[1] Sergent's calling had been that of an engraver; his walls are covered by likenesses of the two objects of his idolatry—his wife Emira and her brother, the celebrated General Marceau. In the memory of these two his soul seems constantly entranced, and he dwells on their rare and delightful qualities in a manner totally inconsistent with any other than the most refined and benevolent nature.

"The account I heard of him from his political opponents was that he had been Secretary to Robespierre, had stolen a jewel of immense value, and was an active *Septembriseur*, whereas, in truth, Robespierre had been from an early period his confirmed enemy, and his name was on the list of thirty who would have been guillotined in 1794 if Robespierre had lived another day. The jewel of immense value was handed by him to the Government, and after-

[1] The sketch David made of Marie Antoinette on her way to the scaffold, published in a book entitled *De la Démagogie en France*, surpasses all that can be imagined in its painful reality. The whole history of the unhappy Queen may be read in the face, every trace of softness and beauty gone, the expression a mixture of scorn, pride, and misery.—Ed.

wards figured in the hilt of Napoleon's sword; and the only part he took in the September massacres was to extricate Lally Tollendal and many other victims from the guillotine. Among those whom he saved was M. de Chateaugiron, now French Consul at Nice, who re-entered France, dressed as an English groom, with a Russian Prince in 1793, and was discovered and brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. He applied to Sergent, who handed in some justificatory documents duly attested, fully expecting that they would prove sufficient for the young man's release. But hearing that the expectations of the accused were not sanguine, M. Sergent attended the committee and demanded the papers. They proved not to be forthcoming, and as nothing but the undefended accusation remained, the court said plainly that sentence must follow. Sergent then drew up a declaration that he had himself handed in the exculpatory papers, described their contents, and demanded the release of the accused, which after considerable delay and discussion was granted, in consequence of Sergent's representation."

[During the winter they spent at Nice, M. Sergent was a constant visitor at Mr. Davenport's house. In the beginning of their acquaintance Mr. Davenport asked him to dinner, to meet M. and Madame Carnot.] "He ate very slowly, drank nothing, and said little during dinner, but as soon as the servants left, the vigour of the man evinced itself by the most extraordinary display of memory, eloquence, and power that I ever witnessed. For three entire hours he

talked without halting, except momentarily for the proper name of some revolutionary chief, with which I supplied him. The next most remarkable thing after this exhibition was its effect upon his auditors, who not only survived but listened eagerly, riveted by the great interest of the matter, delivered in so oracular a manner."[1]

With so much that was interesting to communicate, no one can wonder at Sergent's wishing at the same time to vindicate his own character, by putting his reminiscences into a substantial form. He had already written a short memoir in 1801, and he dictated another to Mrs. Davenport in the winter of 1846-7.

On their way back through Paris, Mr. and Mrs. Davenport consulted Mignet, the celebrated historian, on the proposed publication of Sergent's papers, and no doubt it would have been carried into effect had not Sergent-Marceau (he assumed this name after his marriage) and his kind friend, Mr. Davenport, died in the following summer within a few weeks of each other. Some time ago, her attention having been called to the subject by some publications on the French Revolution, Mrs. Davenport (now the Dowager Lady Hatherton) brought Sergent's papers to me, and I was so much interested by them, that she kindly intrusted me with the task of unravelling them.

The materials consist of—

[1] Note written by M. Davenport in 1847.

1. The Memoir, written in 1801, with the following motto from Voltaire—"Opinion is called the queen of the world, and when Truth attempts to cope with her, she is vanquished in the struggle. She must rise and fight again twenty times before she drives the usurper Opinion from her throne."

2. The Memoir, dictated to Mrs. Davenport in 1846-7. In this he always speaks of himself in the third person.

3. A paper addressed, "To my calumniator," *A mon Délateur*, defending himself from the various charges brought against him.

4. Some voluminous notes on various Histories, with an Introduction.

5. Some speeches of Sergent's on the Condition of the Poor, and a report on the Military Hospitals.

6. A short unfinished Memoir of Brissot.

7. Several notes and characters of his contemporaries, who were alternately actors and victims in the stormy scenes he describes.

Besides these MSS., Lady Hatherton lent me a short Memoir he wrote of his wife, privately printed in 1837; a Memoir by Sergent of his brother-in-law, General Marceau, published at Milan in 1820; and the *Revue Rétrospective* for 1834, to which Sergent contributed several papers.

In answer to my inquiries, I found that only one notice of Sergent had ever been published—a short pamphlet written by M. Noël Parfait, and published at Chartres in 1848. For a long time I tried in vain

to obtain a copy of this Memoir. It is out of print, and no bookseller in Paris or London knew anything about it. The only copy I could find was in the *Bibliothèque Nationale,* and I spent many hours there taking copious notes. But this was very unsatisfactory, and I ventured last autumn to ask M. Léon Say, who I believed was acquainted with the author, to procure for me a copy of the little work. He was so obliging as to apply to M. Noël Parfait, who with equal kindness and courtesy complied with the request. The work has proved most valuable, especially for the latter part of Sergent's life, of which he says little in his Memoirs.

Sergent's style is as diffuse as his conversation appears to have been. I have tried to condense it as much as possible without losing its character. His Memoirs contain no continuous narrative—only disjointed notes. I have found it impossible to render them intelligible without supplying a great many connecting links. I feel that some apology is needed for repeating a story which has been so often told; but I think that many of my readers will be thankful to be spared the trouble of referring to standard works.

M. C. M. Simpson.

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PART I.—EARLY LIFE.

1751—1789.

REMINISCENCES OF A REGICIDE.

CHAPTER I.

1751—1771.

Birth and parentage of Sergent—His power of speech—Artistic talents—Studies under St. Aubin in Paris—Return to Chartres, 1771.

It was in the cathedral town of Chartres, which stands on a slope washed by the Eure in the fertile province of Beauce, that Antoine François Sergent first saw the light. He was born in the year 1751, of bourgeois parentage; his father was a gunsmith, and his mother (who died at his birth) and her father before her were engravers. From her he inherited the artistic powers which he afterwards turned to account in organizing the *fêtes* of the Republic, and which finally earned for him the distinction of being one of the principal founders of the gallery of the Louvre. The College of Chartres, where he received his education, was an excellent institution, and many distinguished scholars were trained within its walls. Sergent's social qualities and his affectionate disposition made him a great favourite with his schoolfellows, and the mother of one of them, Madame Vallou de la Garenchère,

proved a valuable friend in his early career. He was very industrious, and his talent for recitation was much admired on the public days which closed the academical year. His voice was remarkable, sweet yet sonorous, and his pronunciation clear and pure. This gift of oratory was destined to be exercised on the Parisian populace, whose attention, he says, he could always command, and whose madness he is justly proud of having often been able to restrain.

These qualifications seemed likely to ensure success at the bar, and his father was anxious that he should follow that profession in his native town. But his passionate love for art drove him in another direction, and fashioned the whole course of his life. Already at the age of fourteen, introduced by Madame Vallou, he had found time while sedulously pursuing his other studies to give lessons in drawing to several young ladies belonging to the best families. He was thus enabled to acquire the tone and habits of good society, which he was soon to exercise in a wider sphere.

At the age of sixteen he prevailed on his father to send him to Paris, to study under the celebrated engraver, Auguste St. Aubin. Only this powerful motive, he says, could have torn him from his native town and loving family. Without it he would probably have lived and died in obscurity.

When Sergent arrived in Paris, in 1767, Louis le Bien-aimé was still on the throne, and society was never so corrupt, so frivolous, or so charming. "No one," said Talleyrand thirty years after, "who did not live in Paris before 1789 knows how delightful life can be made."

Thanks to the numerous memoirs of the time, we are now enabled to form a vivid idea of the perfection to which had reached what Gibbon calls

"that inestimable art which softens, refines, and embellishes the intercourse of social life." Tiny children were trained to it from their cradles, little boys of eight or nine were powdered and pomatumed, dressed in court suits, their swords by their sides, their hats under their arms, and were taught to kiss gravely the hands of little maidens of six, who could scarcely breathe in their stiff stays or stir in their huge paniers. Every movement was measured, and every word calculated. To the simplest observation these infants replied with a compliment, often in verse; long practice thus brought grace and ease. Good-temper, consideration for others, and deference towards old age were universal, and if the Christian moralities were sometimes at a discount, the Christian graces were scrupulously cultivated. People ruined themselves with the utmost gaiety; it was good taste to squander, and to be over head-and-ears in debt. A little boy brought back to his father a purse of gold for which he had no use, and the Marquis chucked it out of the window. Girls were married so young that children were an embarrassment and an interruption, and how could it be otherwise when society took up the whole of the day? Even in the country Arthur Young complains of the slavery of being in powder and silk stockings by noon (the dinner hour), and expected from that time forth to make conversation until any hour the next morning.

Sergent's character was essentially serious; he had of course no access to the charmed circles we have been describing; but nothing excites such Spartan sternness as the proximity of a delightful, however corrupt and frivolous, society from which one is excluded. In the house of his master St. Aubin he saw many artists and academicians, whose talent gained them admittance into the highest society.

He instances among the most frequent visitors the celebrated Abbé Barthélemy, author of the young Anacharsis, whose life he saved in 1792, the Abbés Mulot and Leblond, the painter David, etc., etc. M. and Mme. St. Aubin had no children of their own, and they adopted Sergent as a son. He was allowed to be present at all their evening receptions, where, he says, he derived great benefit from the conversation of his master and his distinguished guests.

The lounger along the Quai Voltaire may still see the sort of engravings for which St. Aubin was famous. They partake of the prettiness and affectation and real grossness of the time. One was called *Le bal paré*, another *Le concert.* Sergent is proud of having sold three of his own designs to his master. With this excellent teaching, and the advantage of studying the numerous *chefs d'œuvre* even then in Paris, Sergent made rapid progress; but in the year 1771 the doating affection of his grandmother recalled him to Chartres, where he lived for the next twelve years, paying an annual visit to Paris, and each time regretting more and more that he had to leave it. He had, however, one powerful attraction to his native town, in the remarkable woman whom he adored for sixty years, and who influenced the whole tenor of his life.

CHAPTER II.

1765—1784.

Emira—Her father's profession—Miserable home—Assists her father—Torture not yet abolished—Learns housekeeping—Her love of reading—Her beauty and talents—Strange customs at Chartres—Suitors—Unhappy marriage of Emira—Her multifarious occupations—Society at Chartres—Balls—Drawing lessons—High principles—Indifference to admiration—Adopts her half-brother Marceau.

Two years before he had ever left Chartres Sergent, in his frequent visits to an intimate friend, the son of a rich notary, M. Fureau, observed in a house on the other side of the narrow street a young girl, so assiduously occupied that the noise and laughter by which the young fellows (one of whom was the celebrated Brissot)[1] tried to attract her attention, never once caused her to look up.

The rooms of this friend of Sergent's were on the upper story, so that they could see all that went on in the ground-floor opposite, where Emira lived.

Her real name was Marie Marceau Desgraviers. Her father was Registrar of the Royal Criminal Court of the Province (Greffier du tribunal criminel du Bailliage Royal de la Province); the position of her family was above that of Sergent; he had not the chance of speaking to her twice in two years, still, he says, it was at that time happiness enough for him

[1] See Note 2, Appendix.

to see her every day, and to catch the soft accents of her melodious voice—that voice which to the last day of her life vibrated to the inmost recesses of his heart.

"Oh, Emira!" he thus apostrophizes her, "it is thus that I watched thy first steps in a life which already was to thee a vale of tears! Child that I was, I knew not—when the mere sight of thee filled my heart with joy—I knew not that that heart would be thine and thine only till death. I knew not that one day thy heart would beat with equal ardour, and that I should hear from thy lips the dear avowal that its beatings had been reserved for me! I knew not that I should this very day, two hundred leagues from our birthplace, shed tears over thy tomb, and lay on it wreaths of myrtle and cypress!"

Her early life was full of bitter trial. That sweet voice, which moved Sergent so deeply, was often heard by him interceding for her mother, whose habits of intemperance her father punished with blows. M. Desgraviers was guilty of the grossest immorality under his own roof; the house was a desert, no one could bear to enter it, except on business. At stated intervals he gave an official dinner, consisting of men only, at which the ladies of the family were not present. Emira's sole intercourse with the world was an occasional chat in the evening on the doorstep with other young girls, according to the primitive habits of the town, where it was even customary to play at battledore and shuttlecock in the street.

Between a mother afflicted with such a degrading

propensity, a father whose conduct outraged decency and morality, and brothers whose example could only have perverted her, Emira grew up serious, industrious, and self-reliant. Sergent says that, besides her natural dignity and purity, there was a safeguard in the hideous deformity of the vice she saw around her; it was not disguised, as in the upper classes, by a varnish of gaiety and elegance. All the morning she was to be seen working with her hands, attending to the house linen, the pride of provincial families; in the afternoon she would draw near the window (it was then that her young adorer could see her best) and study attentively, never raising her eyes from the page, except to write extracts in a large book. He found out afterwards that she did not read plays or romances; a translation of Young's *Night Thoughts* and the *Pensées de Pascal* were her favourite books. There was a melancholy in them which touched her imagination, and suited well the gloomy home where laughter was never heard. Often her father would return from his official duties, pale and abstracted, rejecting her caresses, answering her eager questions with tales of revolting crimes and of hideous tortures which he had been witnessing; for it was his duty to be present when the "Question" was applied.[1] He had also to conduct the criminal to the scaffold, to endeavour to extract a tardy confession, read the sentence, and see it executed.

M. Desgraviers was a lawyer, and nothing else; he had neither cultivation nor interests outside of his profession, and when he sent his daughter for a short time to a convent, he desired that she should not be tormented with learning, and as to writing,

[1] Torture was abolished only by the sanguinary tyrant, as the Jacobins called him, Louis XVI.

all that he wanted was that she should be able to sign her name and keep the washing lists. She came back so much dissatisfied with her ignorance that she set to work diligently to remove it. She persuaded her brother's writing-master to give her secret lessons, and her handwriting became so good that her father preferred her to any other secretary.[1] Henceforward it was her duty to sit part of the day in her father's study, copying abstracts of criminal cases, thus early acquiring a knowledge of the dark secrets and fearful storms culminating in crime which agitate the perverted human heart. Into this study were shown the victims of seduction, swearing to the paternity of their offspring—here too she would see the unhappy victims of false accusations return mutilated from the torture-chamber.

Meanwhile the poor drunken mother, who had been very handsome, would sit half-dressed at an open window in a state of intoxication, displaying her charms to the derision of the passers-by.

Such were the scenes and such the occupations in which Emira's life was spent at an age when most girls, tenderly fostered and guarded from the knowledge of evil, are being carefully trained and allowed the amusements appropriate to their years. Her mother died when Emira was nearly thirteen, and she was sent once more to a convent to prepare for her first communion. It is no wonder that she fell into extreme devotion. She practised all sorts of austerities, and being told by the nuns and her confessor that her beauty was a snare, and would endanger her salvation, she inoculated herself secretly with small-pox. Fortunately the attack was mild, and she escaped with little damage. On her return home she found a great improvement. Her father

[1] Sergent gives a facsimile of it. It is beautiful and perfectly legible.

had married again; decency and respectability had taken the place of the former degrading scenes. The young wife, however, became jealous of her step-daughter, and Emira was sent on a long visit to her aunt, Madame Marceau de Lafosse, who lived some miles out of Chartres. Madame Lafosse had two daughters, and Emira for the first time enjoyed companionship of her own age and sex, and an introduction into society. Her extreme shyness wore off in this congenial atmosphere. Her aunt taught her all the secrets of housekeeping, in which Madame Lafosse and her daughters excelled. She learned to rise with the sun, to feed the chickens, milk the cows, and to cook. She soon undertook, with the intention of pleasing her aunt, the whole domestic management.

In spite of M. Desgraviers' contempt for female learning, he had always been proud of his daughter's abilities. "That child is never so happy as when she has a book in her hand!" he used to say, and he often brought her books, sometimes not by any means fit for her to read. These she rejected with horror, and seeing in the preface to the *Nouvelle Héloïse* that "the young girl who reads this book is lost," she shut it up and never, even after her marriage, would read it. She was equally shocked when the Old Testament was put into her hands.

Her young step-mother pretended to be a *bel-esprit*. She entirely subjugated her husband, and, in spite of M. Desgraviers' love for his daughter, he felt that an early marriage for her was the only prospect of peace.

She had many suitors, but, in consequence of the bad reputation of her home, few that were eligible. Sergent did not dare to present himself. Neither his family nor his prospects were such as to warrant any hope of success. He had scarcely ever spoken

to her, and his passion was kept in check by its very hopelessness. He thus draws her portrait at this age :—

EMIRA SERGENT MARCEAU.

"Emira was rather below the middle height; her head was set gracefully on her shoulders; her bust was rather full, but as much as could be seen of it through the gauze, with which it was always carefully covered, beautifully formed and of

dazzling whiteness; her light, easy, graceful walk was not without a certain voluptuousness due to the roundness and suppleness of her limbs. Her muscles were strong, and she preserved her upright and youthful carriage to the last. She had none of the languor and habits of self-indulgence common among women, such manners would not have suited her character, which was full of energy and entirely free from affectation. She had early inured herself to all sorts of athletic exercises. It was the custom at Chartres for young men and women to wrestle together in public, like the Spartans of old. Emira would never wrestle with any but her brothers, or married men in their wives' presence, and never until after our marriage with me, for she would not allow our friendship to be sullied by any personal familiarity.

"Her brothers taught her to shoot, to fence, to drive, and to ride; I remember her riding in man's clothes a distance of twenty leagues, to save the reputation of her cousin's wife. She was an excellent walker; she walked all over Switzerland with me in 1796, and in one day accomplished ten leagues of very rough climbing.

"Her waist was not one of those you could encircle with your hands, a beauty, if it be one, which women owed to their whale-bone stays. (It was the custom for mothers to take their daughters when almost infants up to Paris to have them imprisoned in these machines.) She hated every sort of *gêne*

in her dress; she thus was able to give to every movement the softness and grace attained by our great actresses. Her arms were those of a statue yet more beautiful, for a rosy dimple adorned the elbow; her delicate wrist, encircled generally with a simple band of black velvet, joined these arms to little dimpled hands which one longed to cover with kisses. They would have been perfect models for a sculptor if she had spared them more, but she was a stranger to the ridiculous vanity which renders some women and even men idolators of their hands. Her foot was not in proportion with the rest of her figure, it was not small, but the instep was well developed, and she wore very pointed toes, high slender heels, and long dresses, so that only the tips of her shoes were visible. No one at present would understand me if I did not give a picture of these shoes which the young girls of that period, silly little things, longed impatiently to assume, and which are now abandoned for ever.[1]

"She was often laughed at during the Revolution by the Dames de la Halle for still wearing them. Her face was round rather than oval, a form which, although not so dignified, is much more piquant,

[1] This is Sergent's drawing of the shoe. He was mistaken in supposing the absurd fashion abandoned for ever.

and denotes wit and gaiety. The principal ornaments of her face were two large eyes, beautifully shaped, with broad arched eyelids and long black lashes—the iris was flame-coloured—their sparkling glances were full of fire, brilliant yet soft. At sixty years of age their colour had somewhat faded, but the expression, which resides chiefly in the pupils, was as vivid as ever. It was said of her, as of the Duchesse de Berri, that even in a mask she was not disguised, for her eyes betrayed her. One never tired of admiring their changing expression, which told her thoughts before she spoke. At the same time they held in check presumptuous admirers; not one of these *roués* could endure the glances of contempt and indignation which she flashed on them. I have seen more than one of our young generals abashed before her.

"What charms adorned her mouth, formed by two rosy lips which had the freshness of a flower bathed in the dews of morning! The upper lip was a perfect bow, the lower, full and dented in the middle, seemed to invite kisses. A delicate smile lurked in the corners of her mouth; she was not one of those women who are constantly laughing without any motive, so that their smile degenerates into a grimace. When she laughed two little rows of pearl disclosed themselves. She never gave way to noisy bursts of merriment, which she considered in bad taste.

"Her brow was low, smooth, and broad, the temples full and well furnished. Her long fine dark-brown

hair grew so as to form six points on her forehead, a beauty which at that time was much admired. The regular line of her well-marked arched eyebrows had been a little damaged by small-pox; her nose, well proportioned as to length, came in a straight line from her forehead, and was a little turned up at the tip. No bones could be seen in her soft cheeks adorned by two dimples—nests of love, as the poets call them. Her round chin also had in the middle a dimple, which added to the charm of her countenance.

"It will appear from this description that Emira's was not the beauty of an antique statue. Her face was one of those which attract and fascinate, which one never tires of watching, for they indicate intelligence, and never disappoint their promise. When in grief she was in the highest degree seductive. Her lovely eyes filled with tears, held in suspense for a moment by their long lashes, like pearls of morning dew, thence to drop slowly on her cheeks. Not one of her delicate features was distorted, no convulsion betrayed the acuteness of her sufferings. I never saw any one but her first husband unaffected by her tears, probably because he so often caused them. Her father used to give way at once. I have often wiped away those precious tears before complete happiness was our lot, but never, never did I cause her to shed one for my sake. One of the gifts which she preserved to the last was her voice. Its tones so soft, so penetrating, so harmonious, never harsh, or

forced, or loud, were those of a syren when animated by friendship or love.

"Whatever happened she was never heard to scream, partly because she was insensible to fear; if she saw any creature in distress, it was her first impulse to rush to its assistance.

"Anger in her was rare, and transient as lightning; her voice lost nothing of its sweetness, her eyes flashed fire, and she let fall a few rapid, withering words with a calm dignity which added to their force. It was in this way that she addressed Marshal Lannes, who ventured to speak ill of me. Her inferiors never had occasion to complain of her humiliating them, her servants waited on her with love, and never left her of their own accord.

"She spoke with ease and rapidity; she was never heard to utter the drawling Hein?—an expedient by which people seek to disguise the sluggishness of their thoughts.

"It is strange that, with so beautiful a voice in speaking, she sang very indifferently, perhaps from want of good teaching. She never would sing at the dinner-table, a provincial custom which is often exceedingly tiresome. On the other hand, she read aloud remarkably well. I myself gave her lessons in this art, which I cultivated from the age of twelve. My own voice is clear, sonorous, and well-tuned, I have always produced an effect in speaking, and my pronunciation is so good, that at my present age (eighty-six), and without a tooth in my head, I defy

any orator to surpass the distinctness and power of my utterance.

"Such was Emira at fourteen, and such she was at eighty, for she never changed! When she returned from her aunt's, she set to work more seriously than ever to repair her defects of education: it was her maxim—'What a man or woman *wills* to do, that he *can* do!' But some help was essential; her beauty and grace soon procured it, for in France all are ready to worship and to assist beauty. One of my companions, D——, who at that time used to watch her every evening as I did, was bolder and more fortunate than any of us (he since became President of the Tribunal of which M. Desgraviers was Registrar); his rank and his means would have justified him in offering her his hand, and he would have done so but for the low opinion entertained by his mother of M. Desgraviers' conduct, and her fear lest Emira should have inherited her mother's weaknesses. He paid his court to her by lending her the best books in the fine library which had been left to him by his father. D—— confided his passion to me; I was not jealous, I was too hopeless, and I liked hearing Emira praised. After accompanying his books for some time with huge nosegays, he ventured to send a burning love-letter. Emira, who never cared for romances, did not choose to be the heroine of his; she returned his letters and his books, begging that he would send her no more.

"Other lovers came forward; four had seen her

only at the window, in church, or out walking. One only, her father's chief clerk, knew her well enough to appreciate her character and principles; he would have made her happy, but her father refused him on account of his poverty.

"Before, however, she had completed her 14th year Emira, always dutiful, accepted a husband who was forced upon her. Her tears were in vain; her father entreated, and finally commanded. This suitor, M. Champion de Cerrol, was a man whom she could not possibly love. She told him so, and begged him to withdraw his pretensions; but no, although he was not in love with her he persisted. She was dragged to the altar, and his aunt told me afterwards that the wedding was like a funeral.

"M. Champion was in a good position: he had two posts in the tribunal, his family belonged to what was called the *Noblesse de robe;* his great grandfather had received a patent of nobility from Louis XIV., but the family had the good sense to suppress the patent, as it would have interfered with their accepting lucrative posts in the magistracy. M. Champion, however, derived no advantage from his position, except that of marrying Emira—an advantage he was incapable of appreciating; he was addicted to low company of both sexes, and even his own brother could not endure his society. Poor Emira! with her lofty and ardent soul! After the marriage I have often seen him make her cheeks flush and her eyes fill with tears at his coarse jests

and brutal embraces; when he saw her disgust he would swear at her—*Sacrée Begueule, fais la sucrée!* He was guilty of such coarse and brutal violence, that on the third day after their marriage she ran back for a time to her father's house. He even attempted to blacken her reputation.

"I was in Paris when the marriage took place. About a year afterwards I came for a month to Chartres, and once only had the opportunity of speaking to Emira. One day her aunt by marriage brought her to our house. They came to ask me to take to Madame Champion's son (a young law student, cousin to Emira's husband) a ring, the centre of which was composed of a stone supposed to be a charm against bleeding from the nose. Emira, who had allowed her aunt to make the request, drew the ring from her pretty finger, and in soft tones which went to my heart begged me to take it to her cousin.

"She had scarcely reached her sixteenth summer, she was a flower freshly blown; she was in deep mourning for her father-in-law, and she always looked more attractive in black than in anything else. The tone of her voice made an impression on me which I could not explain. It was quite different from the feeling I had had for her two years earlier. I could not get rid of this impression, it followed me to Paris. I kept the ring, which was of little value; sometimes I put it on my finger, at others it gave me a pleasurable sensation to look at it in my drawer.

I forgot all about cousin Champion, and remembered only her who had trusted me with it. More than a month passed after my return, and at last the cousin came to ask for it. I must have excused myself with some tact, for from that time we became intimate. For eight years Champion and I enjoyed a friendship which love itself could not have surpassed, and it was through him that I learnt to know and love Emira."

Society was at this time in a state of transition; even the highest classes were beginning to tire of their elegant frivolity, and at least a pretence of study was becoming the fashion. Natural science was the favourite pursuit.

"Cousin Champion gave lessons in chemistry and natural history to Emira, and she became passionately fond of roaming in the woods, chasing the butterflies and other insects, disregarding the tan and freckles which followed so much exposure to the air. This pursuit led naturally to botany, which she studied according to the system of J. J. Rousseau."

It seems extraordinary how she found time for such multifarious occupations. First and foremost she put housekeeping.

"Accustomed to rise with the sun, she might be seen any morning walking back to the town at 8 o'clock, accompanied by her servant Ursula (the excellent girl who lived with her seventeen years), laden with baskets containing the produce of her garden, which was about a mile and a half out of

Chartres. She herself would carry boxes full of herbs and insects, but before classifying them she put on a large white apron, and set a good example to her maids by preparing the vegetables, clarifying the honey (sometimes making the hives for the bees), and concocting the preserves, syrups, etc. A book of four hundred pages in her own handwriting, which I still possess, attests that nothing relating to the management of a house was unknown to her. If a supper was given by her during the Carnival, the creams, tarts, preserves, etc. were all prepared by her. The way in which she adorned the table with flowers was also much admired. Still more to be praised was the manner in which she arranged her guests; and in order that none might feel neglected, and each have his favourite neighbour, she used to put the name of each one under his napkin. Almost all the house linen was made by her; she was a very skilful cutter-out, and she was never ashamed of being found mending her husband's clothes. She made her own dresses with the help of Ursula, whom she trained into an excellent dressmaker.

"Her husband put all authority over the house into her hands; she held the purse, and paid the servants and the bills, which she kept carefully. They wanted to build a little country house—it was she who drew the plans and superintended the works. It was curious to see her, a woman of three-and-twenty, as early as four in the morning at the head of the masons and carpenters. The foreman said—

'Pardieu, madame, you understand it as if you were one of the trade!' She painted the walls inside, and arranged the garden with much taste.

"Even these occupations were not enough; her hands were so skilful that she helped her cousin in manufacturing his chemical tools; she established a turning lathe in her study, and did not shrink from exposing her little hands to all the dangers of manipulating the wood, cutting it with a chisel, and afterwards turning it into pretty little ebony candlesticks inlaid with ivory, snuff-boxes, etc., which she gave to her friends. I still possess two large ebony rulers which she gave me sixty years ago; I have preserved them through all the vicissitudes of my life. I painted her picture standing in her study; her collection of insects and her drawings cover three parts of the walls, her lathe and a number of books are upon the table, she is reading a letter from me which causes her to shed tears of emotion. She preserved this letter; it still lies in her desk.

"More intellectual studies were not neglected; she left behind her six large quarto volumes filled with extracts from her favourite authors, and notes upon them in her own hand. She did not care for ordinary poetry, and she liked few novels; the English were those which she preferred, especially those of Richardson.

"Her conversation was agreeable, because she never tried to usurp more than her share; she knew how to listen, and never interrupted any one except

for the purpose of refuting slander or evil-speaking. Emira Champion was the champion of the weak and the absent. She was not sarcastic—she expressed herself clearly and to the point on any subject that she understood, but on any other she contented herself with asking questions. In absolutely frivolous conversation on the fashions or similar trifles she never willingly shared; she would leave it to join a group of men talking on serious subjects; she always preferred the conversation of older people.

"Although she held firmly to her opinions when they were the result of deliberate reflection, she never asserted them dogmatically, but retired from the controversy. She did not treat *me* after our marriage in this way; she would argue with me, always supporting her opinion by reasons, never as if she had a right to dictate. If she yielded she would say that it was an act of conjugal submission, and we closed the argument with kisses. Not that these discussions were ever bitter or sharp, for there was such perfect sympathy between us, that we were ourselves astonished at the similarity of our sentiments and opinions.

'Te souviens tu, qu' après un jour d'absence
Pour tous les deux si lentement passé,
Plus d'une fois j'ai fait l'expérience
Que tu pensais ce que j'avais pensé.'[1]

"When her strong and lively sensibility was roused by some act of tyranny, injustice, or still more of ingratitude, her eyes shot fire, and her tongue refused

[1] Lamartine.

to utter the feelings of indignation which were boiling within her; they burst forth in hurried, broken accents, and the woman who never became angry on her own account seemed possessed with the spirit of vengeance. She was capable of any amount of passion to defend or to save the oppressed.

"Emira with so much beauty and talent could not avoid being a conspicuous figure. Her husband's position obliged her to appear in society, and although not extravagant she dressed well, and always becomingly; she was the last to adopt and the first to leave off absurd and inconvenient fashions, such as *paniers*, *bêtises* (false hips), hoops, huge sleeves, etc. She also disliked very bright colours, and she covered her chairs with a pink brocade which formed part of her trousseau.

"She was passionately fond of dancing. At Nice, at the age of seventy-eight, she figured in a quadrille, and far from appearing ridiculous, all the young people pressed her to continue. The minuet and the allemande were the dances she preferred; she would never have permitted the familiarity of the waltz or the galop. There were a great many good dancers at Chartres, five or six were especially distinguished; Emira was among them, and they were engaged as partners for the whole evening from one ball to another. Of these ladies there were only two besides Emira who were pretty; but these three had the figures of nymphs. They were the nucleus of an order of chivalry formed by the young lawyers,

officers, the *petite noblesse*, and merchants, who established balls all through the year. They called themselves *Chevaliers de l'Union*, and at first got into difficulties with the bishop for dancing during Lent. He tried to dissolve the society, but succeeded only in making it more numerous. The members wore a silver medal—on one side was a shell in the act of bursting, with *Crepitat equites non territat*, and on the other *Union*, surrounded by a wreath of oak-leaves (the arms of the town). I engraved the design for this medal.

"Emira's cousin presented me to his family as his friend, and soon we three were one in friendship and pursuits. Together we roamed about the country in search of plants and insects, and I put her in correspondence with MM. Mauduit, Mallet, and Geoffroi, all distinguished naturalists. Cousin Champion wished her to add drawing to her other talents, and he suggested that I should give her lessons. She obtained the approbation or rather the consent of her husband, for he cared little for any of her accomplishments. At last then the privilege which I had so ardently desired in former days was to be mine! I was to see her every day, to be near her in the most familiar intercourse, included in all their parties of pleasure, received by all their acquaintance, invited to all their houses! I was happy, but as yet I thought of her only as an attractive woman.

"There is no situation more delicate or more

delightful than that of the drawing-master to a pretty woman. Love almost always comes to make a third. The habit of seeing each other every day brings confidence which is followed by an innocent familiarity, for I suppose virtue to be on one side and honour on the other when I am describing what I felt in my young days. What happy moments!—yet not without danger! . . . Although my affection for her never diminished in intensity, it assumed an entirely different character when I came to know Emira well. I am not writing of love with its pains and pleasures; the basis of my feeling for her was composed of admiration, esteem, and respect. My knowledge of her virtuous principles and of her miserable domestic life, which she had the delicacy to cover with a veil before strangers (for no one but her cousin and I ever heard her complain during the course of ten years of her husband's misconduct), made me bind myself by a vow which I never once broke, that I would not cause her to blush for our friendship. Many will find it hard to believe in so much self-control, but the constancy of my passion, which has even survived its object, and the pious love I entertain for her memory, are surely sufficient proofs for delicate and feeling minds, and I wish to speak of Emira to no others.

"Of adorers she had only too many. Among others a young and clever chemist, whose head was turned by her charms, conceived the idea of giving her a soporific which should give her all the appearance

of death; he would then carry her from the grave-yard to a distant country. How far were these love-sick gallants from any chance of captivating her!

EMIRA IN HER STUDY.

(From an old Print, drawn and engraved by Sergent.)

The high idea she entertained of human dignity was enough to protect her. A man on his knees before Emira was degraded for ever in her eyes—she was

too good-natured to say, as she might, 'Lie down and let me trample on you;' she contented herself with laughing and walking away. She was guided by her heart and an intelligence beyond her years, not by the experience and wisdom which she ought to have found in her husband. I preserved her by my advice and watchful care from indulging in discussions which turned upon love. Such conversations with the other sex conceal a danger which women often do not perceive until it is too late. The letter in her hand in my drawing of her was on this subject.

"Another of her trusted friends was her husband's aunt, who painted all men to her under the darkest colours; her cousin's advice was likewise sound and disinterested."

Besides her own high principles, her friendship with Sergent and her cousin, and the constant occupations which filled up her time, Emira had a powerful safeguard in her love and care for her half-brother, the famous General Marceau. Ill-treated by his unnatural mother, he took refuge at five years old with his sister, who adopted him and cherished him as if he had been her own son.

"It was on these principles—energy and perseverance—that she brought up her pupil, who, thanks to them, attained an immortal glory. I will let him speak for her, this young hero who died at the age of twenty-seven. He was General-in-Chief at twenty-three, and conquered an army of more than 80,000

men in a single battle.[1] All Europe regretted him, as much for his virtues as for his talents. He often repeated to his comrades, and even to his enemies, 'If I am worth anything, if I deserve the esteem which you are willing to bestow on me, I owe it all to my *Bonne sœur*.' It was by this name that he always called Emira."

[1] Marceau, General, born in 1769, at Chartres, son of a registrar of the Court of Bailliage; entered the army at fifteen years of age; in 1791 appointed chief of the 1st Battalion of the Volunteers of the Eure; was sent with the rank of captain to the war in La Vendée; was appointed, by the advice of Kléber, General-in-Chief of the Army of the West; won the battle of Mans, 12 December, 1793; General of Division in 1794, he gained the battle of Fleurus. In 1795 he protected the retreat of Jourdain's army; he had several times repulsed the enemy, when he was mortally wounded; the enemy joined with the French troops to render him the last military honours. Marceau was as distinguished for his humanity and disinterestedness as for his courage and strategical talents. A statue was erected to his memory at Chartres (*Biographie Universelle*).

CHAPTER III.

1784—1789.

Sergent leaves Chartres—Emira retires to a convent—Sergent a tutor—Quarrel with his employers—Altered state of society in Paris—Sketch of politics—The States-General.

SERGENT'S grandmother died in the year 1784, leaving her small fortune to her beloved grandchild, who immediately made it over to his father (always, he says, his best friend), and finally left Chartres.

Emira's unworthy husband had at about the same time exhausted the patience of all who were connected with him. He had squandered his own and his wife's fortunes, and seduced her sister, besides occasionally using personal violence towards herself. With the full consent of the families on both sides, she separated from him in 1784, and spent the next four years in the Convent de l'Ouie, about twelve leagues from Paris, where Sergent says the intercourse with many ladies of the highest distinction gave to her manners the ease and dignity of the best society.

In one of his journeys to and from Paris he had made the acquaintance of the Princess Charlotte de Rohan Chabot, a lady of considerable literary attainments, who took a fancy to him, and offered him the post of tutor to her only son; but first she said they must become better acquainted with each other. "I wish my son's tutor to be an intimate friend and

a constant inmate, he and I must therefore study each other's characters," and she invited him to spend some months at the castle.

Such a position was not likely to suit a man of Sergent's independence. When he first arrived the princess's nephew, the famous Prince de Lambesc (the same who charged the mob at the head of the Royal-Allemand in 1789), objected to sitting at the same table.

"Do you not think, my dear nephew," remonstrated the princess, "that M. Sergent's conversation is full of cleverness and information?"

"Why yes," he replied.

"You have seen his works," she rejoined; "their merit is generally acknowledged, his qualities and talents are surely enough to ennoble him. My daughter and I wish to show him so much respect that he will not feel the inferiority of his birth."

The Prince de Lambesc continued to urge that Sergent should dine in his own room, but the princess would not give way. She told her nephew that if he or any of the family objected to Sergent they were very welcome to avoid sitting near him.

Sergent, however, did not remain on these excellent terms with the princess. He does not tell us the cause of their rupture, which he describes in these words—

[1] "One evening there were a great many relations of the family in the drawing-room, and Sergent was much surprised at finding himself sharply rebuked by the princess. He felt sure that some enemy had undermined him in her opinion. He defended him-

[1] From the memoir dictated in 1847. He always speaks of himself in this memoir in the third person.

self with respect and dignity, but with firmness. The dispute became warm; the princess's brother-in-law, the Duc de Cossé, who was walking up and down the room, cried to him, 'Enough, M. Sergent, leave the matter alone.' 'I will do so,' Sergent replied, 'M. le Duc, when I have convinced you that I do not deserve the reproaches of the princess.' And turning to her with proper deference, he continued, 'Madame, I have friends in Paris distinguished by their position as much as by their talents; they are kind enough to think highly of me—they will console me for the injustice I suffer here.'

"The princess turned to her daughter Blanche, whom she used to call her white cat, and told her to play one of her pretty sonatas; she then desired M. Sergent, who was standing talking to her husband at the fire-place, to leave the room, as they were about to discuss family affairs. He replied, 'Madame, you do not generally break up the party so early,' and he went on talking to the prince. To fully understand this scene, it is necessary to know that the husband and wife did not agree very well, and that when the princess wished to get rid of her husband she always either sat down to the piano herself, or desired her daughter to do so, for the prince detested music, and invariably went to his own room as soon as it began. He did so on this occasion, and took Sergent with him. On the next morning, when Sergent went, as was his custom, to wish good morning to the prince, he learned that

the princess and her daughter had already left the château for the Abbaye de l'Ouie.

"Sergent remained a week at the château hoping to hear from the princess, but no message came. He determined, therefore, to go to Paris, and on his way went to take leave of Emira at the Abbaye de l'Ouie."

He was received, he says, with great cordiality at the convent; while there he took the portrait of the Princess Blanche, but he refused to see her mother, although the abbess pressed him to do so. The Princess Blanche afterwards married the unfortunate Duc d'Enghien. It is impossible to say whether the princess or Sergent gave the first offence, as he never tells us what was the reason or the occasion for the rebuke she administered to him. Considering her age and position compared with his youth and inexperience, his retort to her when she asked him to leave the family to themselves was at least presumptuous, and at any rate she showed herself in a far more Christian light than the young artist, when she allowed him to take her daughter's portrait, and was even ready to receive him again.

His behaviour is a curious sign of the times, of the revolt against the old superstitious respect for rank. Ten years earlier it would probably not have occurred to him to take such bitter offence. No doubt that with him, as with Madame Roland (who tells us in her memoirs of her indignation at the reception her mother met with from a great lady, Madame de Créqui), this incident influenced his political career.

The year 1785 found him settled in Paris. He continued to associate Emira with his life; they kept up a lively correspondence, and she assisted him in his artistic productions, for which purpose he taught etching and engraving to her. He made enough by

his art to support himself comfortably. He executed a coloured engraving of Necker, two plates of which were exhausted, also engravings of the great men of the time. Another coloured engraving, called *Il est trop tard*, a *sujet galant*, as he describes it, established his artistic reputation. He dwells with true republican complacency on the aristocratic society in which he found Emira on his occasional visits to the convent:

"There were princesses, duchesses, marchionesses, and four rich untitled ladies whose husbands occupied important posts abroad. Emira was the lowest in rank of them all, and beloved and esteemed by all. These ladies, with the abbess, would often adjourn to my room, which was beyond the precincts, and we formed a very agreeable circle."

For the next ten eventful years we shall see little of Emira, but by Sergent's frequent allusions we perceive that she shared his opinions and encouraged him by her sympathy. She went with him into the country (he certainly had no business to be absent from his post) on the 2nd September, 1792, and in 1793 they had a magnificent reception at Chartres. In 1794 she accompanied him on an expedition to rescue her brother Marceau from prison. Sergent had persuaded her in 1789 to leave St. Ouie for a convent in Paris, but although she was divorced she would not consent to marry him until the year 1795, when she gave way, that she might share his exile and poverty.

An extraordinary change had passed over society since the days when Sergent last was domiciled in Paris. The wicked dissolute old king was dead, and the throne was occupied by the virtuous and well-meaning Louis XVI., who had begun the hazardous task of reform. A return to nature was the fashion, and the fair young queen would willingly have

abolished the strict etiquette of the court. To wander in a white muslin gown in the gardens of the Trianon with her devoted friends, Mesdames de Lamballe and De Polignac, was her consolation for the tedious crowds and ceremonies of Fontainebleau and Versailles. She loved to give prizes for virtue with her own beautiful hands, to portion young girls, and to succour the poor. But such doles had no effect in conciliating the lower classes, which were awakening to their wrongs and misery.

In 1785 Necker gave deep offence to the ministers and court by his *Compte Rendu* of the condition of the finances, in which he exposed the abuses of privilege. He was forced to retire, was replaced by two or three incapables, and at length by Calonne, the obsequious minister who replied to the queen's demands, "Madame, si c'est possible c'est fait, si c'est impossible, cela se fera." At the end of this year (1785) the affair of the diamond necklace was in every one's mouth, and the queen's name was a bye-word for contempt and execration. It is now well known that a worthless adventuress personated Marie Antoinette, but at the time it was generally believed that the queen met the Cardinal de Rohan in a summer-house in the Royal Gardens, and was willing to sell herself to obtain this magnificent necklace. Sergent shared to a certain extent in the popular opinion, for he calls the queen in his notes 'Médicis,' but he did not vote for her death in 1794.

Fair words could not fill the exchequer, Calonne therefore tried the experiment of assembling the notables in February 1787. After declaring the deficit, he proposed the renunciation on the part of the nobles and clergy of their privileged exemptions,[1]

[1] It seems monstrous to us that there should have been such exemptions, but they were a relic of feudalism—in the middle ages the nobles furnished the army, while the clergy succoured the poor.

he also suggested the entire abolition of the taxes which pressed most heavily on the poor, such as the salt tax (*gabelle*), and the forced labour (*corvée*) on the public roads. But such a surrender was not listened to, and Calonne resigned his post to Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, and afterwards of Sens, who dissolved the assembly, and endeavoured once more to supply the deficit by means of new taxes and forced loans. The parliament refused to sanction his edicts, and henceforth there arose a universal cry for the States-General, which had not been assembled since 1614. Brienne would not allow himself to be beaten, and he obliged Louis XVI., who loved his people, and would willingly have granted the reforms that were needed, to hold a *Lit de Justice* on August 6th, 1787, to enforce the registration of the decrees.

A year of struggle between the court and parliament followed, at the close of which Brienne was dismissed. The king recalled Necker, and summoned the States-General to meet on May 5th, 1789. That Louis XVI. was far from anticipating the momentous result of this step is proved by the following passage in Sergent's notes—

"On May 4th, 1789, the day before the opening of the States-General, the bookseller Blaizot of Versailles, who had orders to bring to the king everything that was published relating to the political situation, laid upon the writing-table in the king's study a large engraving, held flat by a book at each corner; it was called the funeral of Monseigneur des Abus. It was designed by an engineer officer, a noble. I engraved it—he and I worked together. The king found it, looked at it carefully, and carried it into the room where the queen and all the court

were assembled. He laughed heartily, and explained its meaning; he carried it back to his study, still laughing. On the next day he spoke of it to Blaizot, with whom he was in the habit of chatting familiarly, and whom he allowed to come in alone to his study even if he himself were absent. We were told this by Blaizot himself, who heard it from one who was present in the queen's apartments. Nevertheless the lieutenant of police, three days afterwards, ordered all the copies of this engraving in the shops to be seized, but Blaizot had already sold above a hundred."

The imposing ceremony took place on the following day at Versailles. The splendid pageant has been described by many an eye-witness—the firm attitude and serious purpose of the commons, whose numbers equalled those of the other two estates put together, led by the man whose genius, if it had been equalled by his moral character, might have saved France from the woes in store for her; the magnificence of the nobility in their white plumes and mediæval dresses, marching gaily to their doom; the proud averted looks of the queen, who was only too conscious of her own unpopularity and of the threatening aspect of affairs, unlike the king, who in his credulous goodness, believed that every one was as single-minded and kind-hearted as himself.

The commons, with Mirabeau and Sièyes at their head, were fully aware of their strength, the other two estates were guilty of the deplorable blunder of refusing to deliberate with them. Inflamed by the harangues of their leaders, the *Tiers État* resolved to deliberate independently. They assumed the name of the National Assembly, a few days later were joined by the majority of the clergy, and adjourned to the Tennis Court, where they swore to

continue their deliberations until the constitution was settled. This was the celebrated Jeu de Paume, June 20, 1789.

Then came the royal sitting (*Lit de Justice*) of the 23rd when the king offered many concessions, but in a too peremptory spirit to suit the temper of the assembly. "*Moi seul*," he said, "*je ferai le bonheur de mon peuple!*" A momentary pause of consternation followed the exit of the king. The silence was broken by the Abbé Sièyes. "You are now," he said to his colleagues, "the same, neither more nor less than you were yesterday," and the debate went on as if the king had not appeared. On that day, says Mignet, the authority of the crown fell. The king's speech had made no mention of reforms in the army. The condition of the common soldier was deplorable—he was starved, beaten, and had no hope of advancement. It was therefore no wonder, that on the evening of the 23rd June, the Gardes Françaises refused the order to fire on the people when they filled the courts, and burst into the Château of Versailles, calling for Necker, who had declined to be present at the Lit de Justice, and had sent in his resignation. The queen implored Necker to remain, the whole assembly surrounded his house, and would not leave him till he yielded to their entreaties.

On the 27th the king himself ordered the remainder of the clergy and the nobles to join the assembly. When this became known there was one of those sudden revulsions of feeling which were frequent in the history of this period. The mob surrounded the château, calling for their "good king." Louis XVI. appeared on the balcony with the queen, and the air was filled with acclamations; tears of joy mingled with shouts of triumph, and with a sudden impulse the queen clasped her husband in her arms. The enthusiasm of the people then

reached its climax—they entreated to see the dauphin, and the queen carried him to the balcony and presented him to the crowd. The poor sickly child was dying of a wasting disease, happy in being spared a more terrible fate.

This harmony could not last; the people had felt their strength, they flocked daily into the assembly, encouraging the popular orators. The Court knew that it was conquered, and resolved to make a stand. Once more Louis XVI. was persuaded to dismiss the popular ministers, and call to his counsels the Maréchal de Broglie. Meanwhile Paris was in a state of ferment—the gardens of the Palais Royal were daily filled with excited crowds; a wooden table served as a platform, whence Camille Desmoulins, Loustalot, and others stirred up the people, and the troops fraternized with the mob.

It has been necessary to remind the reader of the early scenes in this great drama, as Sergent does not do more than allude to them.

"I lived," he says in his memoir, written in 1801, "unknown to fame, but beloved and respected in my own circle for the first thirty-eight years of my existence, employed in cultivating art and science, and acquiring by my talents a reputation which made me regret that force of circumstances obliged me to relinquish my profession. I warn my readers not to expect a history of the Revolution, still less a volume of reflections on its causes, effects, or events. I shall speak of the last only in so far as I had a share in them, and of the two first only when they afford an explanation of my conduct."

PART II.—POLITICAL LIFE.

1789—1801.

CHAPTER I.

1789.

Causes of the Revolution—Paris divided into districts or sections—The sections meet in churches—Camille Desmoulins—Prince de Lambesc—Fall of the Bastille—Recall of Necker—King visits Paris—Foulon and Berthier *à la Lanterne.*

SERGENT describes the state of affairs in 1789, and his motives for joining the revolutionary party in the following passages—

[1] "A financial difficulty, the necessity for repairing an enormous deficit caused by the extravagance of the reigns of Louis XIV. and Louis XV., obliged Louis XVI. to convoke the States-General. All he wanted was money. But the people who had to furnish it knew that it would be quickly swallowed up by the insatiable avidity of the ministers, the courtiers, and the officials; they therefore ordered their deputies to grant nothing until the abuses which had brought about this distress were removed. The chief, the most insupportable, and the most iniquitous was the absolute power of the Crown. It had been cleverly and wickedly disguised and made

[1] From a paper of Sergent's, intended as an introduction to his notes on various histories.

endurable in every Court by the formula—'Such is our good pleasure.' Thus the absolute power which reduced a whole nation to misery called itself 'good pleasure,' and it was consecrated by Divine Right. This is why any imprudent wretch who ventured to speak, or write, or prove that its real name was tyranny, was sent to rot in the Bastille. The Assembly convoked at Versailles began indeed by rectifying abuses; the Court, in great alarm, tried to oppose its proceedings by threats, by violence, and by calling in the aid of the army, whose chiefs throve upon these abuses. It was at this time that I became a Revolutionist. I joined the cause of the *Tiers État*, the real force of the nation, which in the month of May was attired in the dress of beadles, and walked behind the two *small* orders; I call them *small* because they were small in number, although they were dressed up in pontifical robes and gold embroideries.

"We (the *Tiers État*) desired to know what they intended to do with our money. The name of *Tiers État* had been fastened on us in derision by certain Royalist newspapers, which set above us the other two orders gorged with privileges, who wanted to go on robbing us. We therefore determined to arm against these robbers, who considered themselves a class destined to live without work. The aim and object of the Revolution was to maintain the constitution of 1789, accepted, sanctioned, and sworn to by the king and the people.

[1] "In 1789 the head-quarters of the Revolution were in the Rue Mauconseil. Paris was divided into sixty districts, and there were meetings held every evening in each district, to which the inhabitants were admitted under the presidency of a citizen, who was elected by vote. M. Sergent soon became known as an ardent partisan of patriotic revolutionary principles. His wise firmness, his eager activity, the good taste and fervour of his speeches rallied round him an imposing majority of the sincere friends of liberty. The principal tradesmen of the Quartier St. Denis had confidence in him, and he was elected unanimously to the presidency of the district or section of St. Jacques l'Hôpital, which he held for eight months.

[2] "Most of these sections chose a church in which services went on at other times. Chairs were put in the nave; usually the bench reserved for the corporation in front of the pulpit was the seat of the President with his secretaries and reporters. Sometimes speeches were delivered from the pulpit. The interest of these discussions attracted many who had no right to vote. They remained in the transepts or the choir: among them were young men and women. Is it strange that these citizens whispered

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847. The district Mauconseil was afterwards rewarded for its revolutionary services by the name of Bonconseil. In 1790 the districts were reduced to forty-eight, and called sections. Sergent always speaks of himself in the third person in this memoir.

[2] From Sergent's notes on Anquetil's *History of France.*

to each other, that the women went on working while they listened? The French lower classes do not like idleness. No one ever ventured to lift up his or her voice so as to interrupt the meeting. Suppressed murmurs were heard when anything ridiculous took place, or if the speaker announced opinions against the rights obtained by the people and sanctioned by law. I, who presided over meetings during the greatest effervescence, between '89 and '91, solemnly declare that I never heard the *Agrarian Laws* mentioned without eliciting signs of disapproval from these people, whose intelligence and morality have been denied. That these women were paid is an absurd falsehood, invented by the anti-revolutionary charlatans, whose voices reached a long way, but whose arms were feeble."

The match was set to these combustible materials when it became known in Paris that the king had commanded Marshal Broglie to concentrate a large army from various quarters round Paris and Versailles.

The news reached the capital at four in the afternoon of Sunday, July 12th. The performances in the theatres were interrupted by wild, haggard men, who cried to the actors, "Stop! Go home. Our enemies have prevailed. Necker is banished, and with him all the ministers who were friends of the people."

The crowd was surging in the Palais Royal. First a low, angry murmur, then the wild cry, "To arms, to arms!" burst forth when Camille Desmoulins, leaping on a table, sword and pistol in hand, addressed them in these words, "There is not a

moment to lose. The dismissal of Necker is the signal for another massacre of St. Bartholomew. This very night the Swiss and German battalions will fall on us." A woman handed him a green riband, which he fastened in his hat. Instantly all who were present stripped the trees of their leaves and fixed them in their hats as badges by which they might recognize each other. Some rushed to the Abbaye to deliver eleven of the Gardes Françaises who were in prison for insubordination, while others burst into a shop, took the waxen busts of Necker and the Duke of Orleans, covered them with crape, and carried them in procession through the Place Louis XV. They were met by Sergent's old enemy, the Prince de Lambesc, at the head of the Royal Allemands. The busts were hewn in pieces, and the mob dispersed, but with so little violence that scarcely any one was hurt. The rumours, however, went forth that the Prince de Lambesc was massacring the people in the gardens of the Tuileries. The Gardes Françaises burst out of their barracks, attacked the Royal Allemands, and put them to flight; the regiment of the Petits Suisses refused to fire on the Gardes Françaises, who thus remained masters of the situation. Sergent throws the blame upon the Prince de Lambesc.

[1] "The Tuileries and the Champs Elysées were full of peaceable citizens enjoying themselves; there was not the least disorder, when about three o'clock a Swiss regiment arrived from the Courbevoie barracks, dragging their guns. The regiment halted in the avenue of the Elysée, and was commanded to load in front of this peaceable crowd. I was there with two ladies. A few moments afterwards Prince Rohan Lambesc posted himself in front of the

[1] Sergent's notes on Anquetil's History.

Tuileries in the Place Louis XV. He fired on the people, and dispersed them. They were carrying some wax busts, and unarmed. I saw one of the busts broken. In the evening the prince, acting probably under orders, planted himself before the barracks in the Rue Basse du Rempart, in which were the Gardes Françaises. They, suspecting that they were to be punished for not firing on the people, assumed a position of defence, brought out their guns, fired on the Royal Allemands, and put them to flight."

Driven to despair by famine and anarchy, threatened by foreign troops from without, the Parisians suffered during this night an agony of terror. A permanent committee of the electors was formed at the Hôtel de Ville, which was besieged by the multitude crying for arms. None were to be found but the muskets of the sentinels. All through the night the tocsin sounded, bonfires were lighted in the streets, and parties of men went from door to door asking for arms and bread.

The next day the committee organized a militia. All the districts offered themselves for this service, and an army was formed of 48,000 men, who assumed the red and blue cockade, repudiating green, as it was the colour of one of the princes of the blood. This force was the National Guard, destined to so much celebrity.

The question still remained—where were arms to be found? Flesselles (the Prévôt des Marchands, who was the head of the Committee at the Hôtel de Ville), in order to gain time, imprudently sent the people to search for arms in places where he knew there were none. Pikes, which were to play such an important part in the Revolution, were fabricated in great numbers; there was powder stored in the

Hôtel de Ville, and the multitude surrounded the Invalides and demanded muskets from the Governor,[1] M. de Sombreuil, who at first would not deliver them up without an order from Versailles. No order, however, came, and he was obliged to yield to the mob in the presence of six battalions of Swiss, and 800 dragoons and Hussars, who sat motionless on their horses. The people returned with their booty to the Hôtel de Ville, where they heard that the Governor of the Bastille, M. de Launay, had replied to the demand for arms and ammunition that he had none. Instantly the cry arose, "Let us attack the Bastille!"

The Bastille, under Louis XVI., was no longer the formidable engine of tyranny which it had been in former days. At its fall only seven prisoners were found within its walls, and every one of these had been incarcerated during the previous reign. The garrison consisted of only eighty-two Invalides and thirty-two Swiss. The latter were to be trusted, but not so the Invalides. All the provisions they had were two sacks of flour and some rice.

When he heard the roar of the approaching multitude, the governor, the old Marquis de Launay, seems to have been stupefied. Like his royal master, he was incapable of decided action. He could not bear either to surrender or to fire on the assailants, who therefore obtained an easy victory. Their heroism has been greatly exaggerated. One of their leaders, the brave Elie, who after the event was carried in triumph covered with laurels round the Hôtel de Ville, described the siege to Marmontel in these words—

[2] "The Bastille was not taken by force; it surrendered before it was attacked. It surrendered on

[1] Sergent was the means of saving his life in 1792.

[2] Memoires de Marmontel, vol. iv. p. 19.

the faith of my word as a French officer, speaking for the people, that no injury should befall any of the garrison if it surrendered.

"These are the simple facts as Elie told them to me," says Marmontel. "He dictated to me the following details—'The outer courts of the Bastille were abandoned. Some desperate men had hewn asunder the chains of the drawbridge, and the multitude streamed into the court.

"'Thence, deaf to the voices of the soldiers, who cried out to them to stop, they pressed on to the walls of the fortress. The garrison now fired for the first time, and the people retired. Only one was killed, and a few were wounded. When this news reached the Hôtel de Ville there was great alarm, and two messengers were sent to stop the carnage. As soon as the Invalides saw them—"Come on," they cried from the towers, "we will not fire on you! The governor is going to meet you; we will give hostages." The white flag was hoisted, and the garrison reversed their muskets. But neither of the two messengers dared to penetrate into the inner court. Meantime the crowd was pressing on to the drawbridge and firing in every direction. The besieged thought they were betrayed, and crying out to the people not to advance, at last fired in their turn.

"'At this second repulse the mob took its usual revenge; the shops and barracks in the outer court were pillaged, and the governor's lodging set on fire. A volley of grapeshot from the fortress had dispersed these thieves and incendiaries, when at the head of a dozen brave citizens I, Elie, came forward to the edge of the fosse, shouting that if the fortress would capitulate no one should be hurt. A note was conveyed to me on a plank across the ditch—"We have 20,000 lbs. of gunpowder; we will blow up the castle

if you will not accept our capitulation." It was signed De Launay.

"'I cried out that I accepted, and all hostilities ceased on the part of the fortress. The governor still hesitated. He wished the capitulation to be signed formally at the Hôtel de Ville, and an imposing guard sent to protect the garrison. But the Invalides would not wait; they exclaimed, "The Bastille has surrendered!" De Launay threatened to blow up the fortress. He seized a match, but it was struck out of his hand by one of the garrison. The bridge was drawn up, and I, Elie, went in at the head of my companions, all honest men, and determined to keep their word. The governor advanced to meet us, embraced me, and offered me his sword and the keys of the Bastille.

"'I refused his sword, but I accepted the keys. Hulin and other Gardes Françaises met the garrison with equal cordiality, and swore to protect and defend them, but their promises were in vain.'

"The mob rushed into the court and fell furiously upon the Invalides. The Swiss, dressed in white smock frocks, escaped in the crowd; all the rest were taken prisoners. Elie and his honest companions tried to rescue the victims, but the populace would not relinquish its prey. Some of the soldiers were killed on the spot, others dragged through the streets as victims. Elie and Hulin did their best to protect De Launay, but it is far easier to head a mob than to restrain it; he was torn from them, and his head cut off after a desperate resistance. The officer who had struck the match out of the governor's hand was murdered, as well as four other officers of the garrison. The attack began at eleven o'clock, at four the Bastille capitulated, and at half-past six De Launay's head was on a pike and carried in triumph to the Palais Royal."

So fell the mighty prison, deemed impregnable, with a crash which shook every throne in Europe. When the news reached Versailles there was consternation in the Court, and rejoicing among all but the Royalist members of the Assembly.

The king was sleeping in fancied security when the Duc de Liancourt, whose office gave him at all times access to the royal presence, entered the bedchamber at dead of night to tell the astounding news. "It is a revolt," said the king. "No, sire, it is a revolution"—words which have since more than once struck terror into a royal ear.

Always anxious to spare and to conciliate, the king, as early as possible on the following day, proceeded to the Assembly unguarded, accompanied only by his two brothers. At first he was received with distrust, but when he promised the dismissal of the foreign troops, the recall of Necker, and pronounced those touching words, *C'est moi qui me fie à vous*, transports of applause broke forth, and he was attended home by a deputation of the members. One hundred members of the Assembly started forthwith to bear the joyful news to Paris, among them were Bailly and Lafayette. The latter received the command of the National Guard, while Bailly was elected Mayor of Paris in the room of the unfortunate Flesselles, shot for having deceived the people by false promises of arms.

The heroes of that day, Lally Tollendal, Espréménil, Bailly, and Lafayette, little knew how soon the fickle populace would turn upon them—that a barbarous death, exile or imprisonment would be their lot at the hands of the very people who were now crowning them with laurels and exalting them to the skies. We shall meet them further on in Sergent's memoirs.

On the 17th the king himself visited Paris unattended by his bodyguard. He received the com-

munion before he started, for he did not expect to return alive. One hundred and fifty thousand armed men lined the roads from Passy to the Hôtel de Ville. At Passy, Bailly received him and presented him with the keys of the city with these words, "I present to your Majesty the keys of your good city of Paris. They are the same which were presented to Henri IV. He had conquered the people, now the people have conquered their king." No sounds of *Vive le Roi* greeted him, the cry was *Vive la Nation!* He walked up the steps of the Hôtel de Ville under an arch of steel formed by the swords of the Freemasons. Within the Hôtel de Ville Lally Tollendal made a great speech, which was rather a lecture to a king than a congratulatory address. Bailly handed him the tricolor cockade, which Louis XVI. fastened in his hat. The mayor presented him in this guise to the people, who now for the first time rent the air with cries of *Vive le Roi*—it was said that they saluted not the sovereign but the tricolor.[1] The people had indeed conquered their king.

The Assembly was waiting to receive him on his return in the Great Avenue, and accompanied him to the château, where the queen, who was in the utmost anxiety, threw herself into his arms with transports of joy.

Some of the foreign regiments were forthwith disbanded. The following is what Sergent says of the Petits Suisses—

[2] "The Swiss regiment, called the *Petits Suisses* (to distinguish them from the *Cent Suisses*, who guarded the interior of the Château de Versailles), were quartered in the Ecole Militaire. Immediately after the taking of the Bastille, a young law-student called

[1] Red and blue were the colours of the city of Paris, white was added as the colour of the King (note by Sergent).

[2] From notes on Norvins' *History of France.*

Maudar appeared in the Champ de Mars, where he found the Swiss regiment under arms. He harangued them, told them that 'the Bastille was taken, and the people, in arms for the cause of liberty, would treat as enemies all who defended the oppressors; that already the fall of the Bastille' . . . Here he was interrupted by the officers, who would not believe this statement. He persisted, explained to them that as they were the allies of the French people, and paid out of public money, they did not belong to the Court, and that if they turned their arms against the people it would be a crime. While he was speaking with energy and eloquence the news came of the fall of the Bastille. The Swiss remembered that the Gardes Françaises had refused to obey the Comte d'Artois and their own colonel when they were ordered to fire on the unarmed crowd in the court of the château. The officers, seeing the inclination of the troops, declared that they would side neither for nor against the people. This resolution being repeated to the Court was more likely the cause of their being disbanded than any desire to comply with the demands of the Assembly."

On the day the troops were disbanded, the first emigration took place, consisting of the Marshal de Broglie, many of the defeated ministers and the principal nobility, as well as the Comte d'Artois and other princes of the blood. Two of the late ministers, Foulon and his son-in-law Berthier, were hanged on the lantern at the corner of the Place de Grève. This was the beginning of the fatal cry, "*à la lanterne.*"

CHAPTER II.

1789—1791.

Abolition of privileges, August 4th — Banquet at Versailles—Attack on the Château, October 6th—Paris conquers its king—Assembly comes to Paris—General distress—Baker hanged, October 20th—The Guilds and the Poissardes.

At this distance of time it is comparatively easy for us to sympathize with all parties in this momentous struggle; with the poor ignorant people who had suffered so cruelly during the *ancien régime* from the injustice of the laws, and the insolence and extravagance of the nobles; with these nobles themselves, in whom adversity brought out so many sweet and lofty qualities; with the attachment of the Court to the Royal family; with the beautiful and high-spirited queen and her innocent children; and lastly, and more than all, with the king himself, who ardently, sincerely, and unselfishly desired the good of his subjects, but who had not strength of character to pursue any line with consistency, though consistent in his endeavour to do right, however mistaken as to the means.

Tocqueville says, "A minister must possess real genius if he can serve a prince who undertakes the regeneration of the nation." There was but one who really was a man of this surpassing genius, Mirabeau, and his gross immorality prevented his powers from obtaining fair play. Madame de Stael calls him the

evil while Necker was the good genius of the Revolution, but Necker was not strong enough to control it.

His star culminated in the last days of July. His journey from Basle was a long triumph, and his reception in Paris almost overwhelming. His daughter says that she fainted with emotion and delight. His first act was to proclaim a general amnesty, which was by no means to the taste of the Revolutionary leaders. Mirabeau attacked the measure in the Assembly, where, owing to the mischievous rule excluding the ministers, Necker had no chance of replying. The edict was rescinded, and from that day Necker's power and popularity declined.

The 4th August saw the abolition of all feudal tenures and rights. Medals were struck, the king was saluted as the restorer of French liberty, and a *Te Deum* was sung to celebrate the event in Notre Dame.

Paris, however, continued in a state of effervescence. A famine, the result of natural causes, joined to mistaken interference on the part of the Government and fear on the part of the farmers to send corn to Paris; a bankruptcy, the consequence of two hundred years of extravagance and misrule; would have been enough to account for the general distress, even without the cessation of ordinary employment caused by the people abandoning their occupations to pour into the streets and take their share in the awful revelry. Rumours, too, reached Paris of grand doings at Versailles, of another importation of foreign troops, of a splendid banquet given to them at the Opera House, at which the Queen distributed white cockades with her own fair hands, while 'O Richard, O mon roi, l'univers t'abandonne' was sung in enthusiastic chorus. And this while the people were starving, and the women in Paris were standing in a *queue* at the

bakers' shops (as they have so often done since) waiting for the dear, bad bread, so scantily provided.

"They have bread enough and to spare at Versailles," was the cry—"let us go to Versailles!"—and a young woman, bursting into a guard-room, seized a drum and led the way, beating it through the streets, calling upon all women to join her.

They responded willingly to the call from every street, from every district, to the number of 8000; they stormed the Hôtel de Ville, and would have set fire to it, had not an usher (Maillard, one of the conquerors of the Bastille, and afterwards foremost in the massacres of September) struck the torch from the hand of the ringleader, and led the horde to Versailles. Vehicles of all sorts were seized, ladies obliged to alight and join the ragged regiment tramping through the mud and pouring rain, armed with pikes, scythes and guns, and followed by a rabble from St. Antoine and other poor districts.

The National Guard sympathized with the women, and besieged Bailly and Lafayette with entreaties to follow them, and bring the king to Paris. Hour after hour Lafayette withstood them. At length about three in the afternoon the Municipality ordered him to march, not too soon to stop the scenes which were going on at Versailles.

"Paris is marching on us," was the cry at the Château. The king was brought back from hunting, and the queen from her last ramble in the gardens of the Petit Trianon. On came the Amazons—they were determined to see the king, to ask him for bread for their starving children. A deputation of twelve was admitted, and received by Louis XVI. with his usual kindhearted courtesy. The leader fainted away with emotion and fatigue; he raised and embraced her, and the women were conquered. They left the royal presence, crying, *Vive le Roi!* This did not

at all suit the temper of their companions outside, and two of the deputation narrowly escaped being hanged with their garters. Some of the women then streamed into the Assembly. The President Mounier was at the Château with the king. When he returned he found his chair occupied by a Poissarde, who was ringing his bell and directing the proceedings. Mirabeau had to be fetched out of his bed to pacify the women. Food was supplied to them, and some sort of order effected.

The rain was pouring in torrents. All through the evening there were several skirmishes, and a serious collision was threatening between the mob and the king's body-guard. Twice the people set a match to their guns levelled at the Château, but the powder was wet, and the guns would not go off. At length, towards midnight, Lafayette arrived with his National Guards. He repaired at once to the Château. "I am come," he said, "to offer my head in your Majesty's cause." He asked to organize the defence within, but he was allowed only to settle the watches without. At five in the morning, thinking all safe, he retired to the neighbouring inn. The inhabitants of the Château were likewise asleep. Suddenly at break of day the queen's ladies were roused by cries of "Save the queen!" The body-guards were knocking at the door, and the Château was in a tumult. There was barely time to throw a *peignoir* over Marie Antoinette, who fled across the Œil de Bœuf into the king's apartment.

One side entrance to the Château had been overlooked, and through it had rushed a troop of rioters. But for the fidelity of the body-guard, several of whom lost their lives, the queen would certainly have been murdered. At length Lafayette made his appearance with a party of grenadiers, and succeeded in expelling the insurgents. But the courts of the

Château were filled by a wild multitude, roaring, surging, hungry for their prey. The king appeared on the balcony. He was received with a shout of *Vive le Roi*—it was not against him that they were exasperated; the cry was for the queen. She stepped out and stood by the king's side, her children clinging to her. The sight of her beauty and courage disarmed the populace. She was to be put to a farther proof. *Point d'enfans* was the cry. She sent back the children, and stood alone. Lafayette knelt down and kissed her hand, and now they shouted, *Vive la Reine.* The body-guard adopted huge tricolor cockades, and fraternized with the National Guards, the king consented to go to Paris, and all was rejoicing and reconciliation.

At one o'clock the royal family left Versailles for ever. They were accompanied by thousands of people. In the van marched the National Guards, fifty cart-loads of corn from the stores of Versailles came next, then the royal carriages, one hundred National Deputies, and troops of all kinds bringing up the rear. In spite of rain and mud, the wild mob and the troop of half-mad women splashed on triumphant. "We shall not want bread any more," said they; "for we have brought the baker, the bakeress, and the little baker's boy!" By the side of the royal coach caracoled Lafayette, on his white charger. It was five in the afternoon when they reached the barrier, where they were met by Bailly, who delivered the keys of the city to Louis XVI., as on that day three months before when "Paris conquered its king." There was wild rejoicing in Paris now, for he was conquered indeed. The king was again exhibited to the people by Bailly, with a huge tricolor cockade. "It is with pleasure and confidence that I find myself in my good city of Paris," he said. The mayor repeated the king's speech, leaving out the word confidence, which

the queen immediately supplied. "Madame," rejoined Bailly, with ready tact, "it is fortunate for you that I did forget it." It was ten o'clock at night before the royal family reached the deserted palace of the Tuileries. No king had occupied it for one hundred years, and no preparations had been made for their reception. So ended the memorable 6th of October.

The Assembly followed the king to Paris on the 19th. A second emigration of princes, nobles, and members of the *Côté Droit*, or Conservative side of the Assembly, took place, and a short period ensued of comparative tranquillity.

It seems difficult to believe that society could go on amid such scenes without interruption. Yet Madame de Stael says it was never so brilliant or so interesting as during the period between 1789 and 1791. The grace of the *ancien régime* still lingered, tempered with the earnestness awakened by the stern realities of the present. The misery of the poor, however, was daily increasing.

Sergent's position as President of the district of St. Jacques l'Hôpital brought him into close contact with the distressing scenes which were of daily occurrence.

[1] "One of the misfortunes," he says, "inevitable in a great revolution, is the general distress. Fear closes every purse, the flight of citizens terrified by persecution occasions failures, foreign commerce is suspended, and many are left without work. Such was the condition of Paris at the beginning of the Revolution. The Municipality obtained a decree for a considerable sum out of the public funds to open public works, such as embankments to prevent inun-

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

dation, reparation of the highways, and construction of new roads, &c. Among the candidates for work preference was given to the poorer districts. . . . What a picture I have to present!—even to think of it makes my heart bleed. I was the confidant of all these starving people—from morning till night my house was filled with them, imploring my help. For the three hundred tickets that I had at my disposal, there were six hundred claimants. I was earning at that time by my art a decent competence (from thirty-six to forty-eight francs a day, sometimes as much as three Louis); an occasional visit to the theatre was my only expense. I gave away freely to the poor creatures for whom there was no room on my list, and rather than see them starve I ruined myself. There came to me lawyers, doctors, artists, engravers, jewellers, eagerly soliciting twenty sous a day, and to earn this they were willing to work with spades, brooms, and barrows. One day I had just given away my last sou to a young woman on the eve of her confinement; I was sitting down to dinner, when a young doctor came in to implore work or alms, or the means of returning to his own country with his wife. The pallor of death was on his face, his eyes were fixed. I could do nothing for him. 'Adieu, sir,' he said calmly; 'go to-morrow and console my wife.' He seized my hand, and pressed it; 'to-morrow send to reclaim my body, if it is exposed on the marble slab (morgue) you will recognize it by this sign . . .' 'I have nothing,' I replied, 'to offer you but this

loaf, take it; if you will return to-morrow I may be more fortunate.' Three days afterwards I had earned enough to send him to Brussels with his wife. Excruciated by the sight of so much misery, I described my position to the district, 'In one month,' I said, 'I shall be forced, in consequence of my sensibility to the sufferings of others, to beg of my successor in this office, and, from feeding the poor, to drag myself hither to ask you for bread. Let us all sacrifice some of those objects of luxury which are not really necessary to our happiness, and of which we shall never feel the loss if they have helped us to fulfil one of the first duties of man—the assisting his fellow-creatures in distress.'

"The Assembly was moved by my speech. In an instant I saw the desk covered with contributions to the amount of 2000 francs in money, assignats, and subscriptions to the fund. A plan suggested by me was adopted—a charitable committee (*comité de bienfaisance*) to help the infirm and industrious poor. This establishment was soon copied in every district in Paris, and was the first model of those which still subsist in the present day."

On the 20th of October a gang collected round the shop of a baker called François. He told the people he had no bread; but a few rolls were found in his shop, which were intended for the Assembly. He was murdered by the mob.

"A baker was hanged in the cloisters of Notre Dame—others were threatened by the gangs which collected under pretence of famine. I was president

of the Quartier St. Jacques, in which were the markets, and I determined to find out for myself what provisions the bakers really had. On the next day abundance reappeared. My plan of inspection was brought before the Municipality, where it was received with enthusiasm, and followed in every quarter of Paris for nearly a year. No more bakers were hanged, and every one could buy bread."

"[1] Sergent feared lest the imprudence of the market women (*Dames de la Halle*) might help to excite tumults. He wished to influence their minds by interpreting to them the edicts which were proclaimed every day, and which were sometimes distorted by Marat and many others. He wished to reach through these women certain classes of men who were formidable, and who constituted themselves into a sort of guild, *i. e.* the coal-porters, the flour-carriers belonging to the flour-market, the unloaders of wood at the riverside, and the water-carriers, who united might form a very embarrassing little army. Although Sergent had given up his artistic labours in order to devote himself to his country's service, he employed all that he had left of his patrimony in establishing a club for these women, who could sell nothing on *fête* days, and who spent their leisure in the streets. He hired a large room, belonging to a wine-merchant in his district, and furnished it with benches and chairs, with a little tribune for orators, and a large stove for use in winter.

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847.

[1] "There were two of these guilds; the *Charbonniers* and the *Forts*, who were porters at the Corn-market and the Halle. They marched with their pikes only when accompanying the National Guard. The *Charbonniers* chose for their chief a man called Naudet, who sold engravings on the Quay, near the Place de Grêve. This man, with whom I as an artist had some dealings, was an energetic patriot, but prudent, and hating disturbance. I was often informed by him of the temper of this numerous body; he often consulted me, and he had enough influence over them to second my advice, which was to keep quiet, and to respect even bad laws. They were never known even in their petitions to ask for more than the right to shed their blood against the enemies of the king and people. No one saw these *Charbonniers* or these *Forts* at Vincennes on the day of the Poignards. It was I who on the day before warned the *Charbonniers* through Naudet, and the *Forts* through the fishwomen (*Poissardes*). With regard to these *Poissardes*, whose actions I was able to influence, it is right that it should be known that some writers have attributed to them excesses which ought not to be laid to their charge. A troop of women dressed like *Poissardes* sauntered about the streets in league with the drummers and trumpeters (not those who belonged to the National Guard), and went with them to serenade the winners in the lottery, beginning with the shops where the tickets were sold, and which

[1] From Sergent's notes on Norvins.

made a considerable profit by these ovations, and were in turn obliged to distribute a great deal of money among these women, who immediately spent it in the neighbouring pot-houses. These women went still further; they stationed themselves at the door of every one who received any appointment, and this occurred so often that the noise went on from morning till night in some quarter or other. These wretched women, whom the public called *Harengères*, ended by open robbery. Many artists' wives brought their jewels to the Assembly to contribute to the resources of the country. Their generous example was followed by others. Hence arose the custom of tying the shoes and breeches with ribbons, the old gold and diamond buckles being among the offerings. The *Harengères* stopped all the ladies they met wearing jewels, and demanded them in the name of the country. If the demand was refused the women snatched them from their wearers. In the same way they stole shoe-buckles, and no one dared to oppose this spoliation, although it was well known that none of the spoil ever reached the treasury. When I became (in 1791) Administrator of Police, I had the satisfaction of putting an end to these excesses. So many complaints were made that I sent word to different posts of the National Guards to arrest some of these women (*en flagrant délit*) red-handed. It was impossible; the mob would not suffer it. The porters, commissioners and *Forts* tore them from the guards, crying

out, 'They are arresting the *Poissardes*.' This roused the populace. I had forbidden the use of the bayonet, as I wished to prevent the spilling of blood, of which the consequences were incalculable in such excited times. The passers-by interfered, and what was more formidable, the shopkeepers and artisans were deceived by these hussies, and became their defenders. The guards had to depart amid cries and execrations. What was to be done? Summon the whole militia of Paris to arrest sixty women, scattered in bands of eight or ten? The Commandant himself (Lafayette) was hampered with difficulties, of which the greatest was the reluctance of the citizens to help in the matter, although it was important. 'Our efforts have no doubt frightened them,' he said; 'let us wait.' While we were waiting, these women, becoming aware that the temper of the people would secure their immunity, grew proud of their resistance to authority. An idea struck me—it was a strange one and by no means magisterial—but I felt that it would be successful. I adopted it. I had reason to be proud of my grotesque measure for restoring public order. I have always found by experience that it is an excellent plan to enlist the passions on the side of authority. I wrote to one of the richest dealers in fish in the great market called *La Halle*. This *Dame de la Halle*, the chief of the *Poissardes*, was called, I know not why, the Queen of Hungary. She exercised a sovereign power over all the *Poissardes* in Paris; she was always their spokeswoman in all the

deputations to the Palace, where they were received with great honour. Both sides of the folding-doors were opened for them, a privilege reserved for princes, ambassadors, and deputations from the higher clergy and the parliament. In the newspapers one read—'The *Dames de la Halle* were admitted on New Year's Day to salute their Majesties,' or 'to congratulate their Majesties on the birth of an heir to the throne.' Hence the important effect of the name *Dames de la Halle* on the populace, and the reason why my endeavours had failed.

As it is my maxim to keep authority in the background when I want to enlist assistance, I asked this woman to call upon me, accompanied by two or three more selected by herself. They came to my office, and I explained to them the facts of the case. They were wounded in their honour and their dignity, and they expressed themselves with the energy peculiar to their calling. 'Pray, sir, believe that the *Poissardes* would never do such things; we should not suffer such doings; the women you speak of are idle hussies, common P——.' 'I was sure of this,' was my reply, 'but they usurp your name, and abuse your privileges. The people love and respect you, songs are everywhere sung in your honour, and no dramatic author would venture to represent you on the stage in a disgraceful or ridiculous light. These hussies have, I repeat, acquired influence over the people, and your corporation will be discredited in the eyes of honest folks, and when next you present yourselves at Court,

you will be turned away, for the title of *Dames de la Halle* will have been villified by these cowardly impostors. The evil will tell in another way—on the large number of *Poissardes* to whom you sell fish only for ready money—these poor women derive much assistance from the weekly loans which they obtain without giving any security. If the title of thief becomes attached to the members of your profession, every purse will be closed. Do you not see the terrible consequences for these poor women, which will affect even your market? To protect you from these misfortunes you and I must unite—will you help me?' 'Yes, sir, we will do whatever you tell us.' 'Well, my good ladies, I am going to propose nothing less than an *insurrection* of your *Poissardes.* Do not let the word frighten you; our insurrection will be only against theft. The people must be undeceived as to the profession of these wretched women who disturb public tranquillity; what *I* have failed in, *you* will be able to effect. Choose among your *Poissardes* one hundred young women, tall and strong, and good-looking if possible (for a pretty woman interests every man); desire these women, who are to form our regiment of Amazons, to be always neatly dressed, for an air of well-being has its effect upon the people; the hussies we wish to punish never look shabby, this is one of their advantages, make use of it yourselves. You must order your deputies to distribute themselves in the streets most frequented by respectable people (as the thieves now do), but to

take care to be always two together, in parties of six or eight, sufficiently near to unite if necessary. These are their instructions—whenever they see any of these women in the midst of a group where they have been thieving, your deputies are to unite and to tell the mob, "These are impostors, not real *Poissardes;* we have no thieves among us, and these women do nothing but thieve. Do you ever see them sell anything? They are lazy hussies, and worse, they never work." Your deputies must then give their merchandize in charge of some honest shopkeeper, and seize upon two or three of the delinquents and flog them in the middle of the street, calling the National Guard, whom I shall instruct to help them, to arrest the criminals and take them to prison. Two or three punishments of this kind will stop these depredations.' I had the satisfaction of sowing in fertile soil; our young fishwomen, with the assistance of some fruit- and flower-women, enjoyed inflicting these flagellations, and the punishment succeeded. My readers will think my plan amusing and my agents peculiar; it was, however, highly applauded by the public, who rewarded the pretty executioners with hearty kisses."

I have anticipated a little chronologically in order to keep together Sergent's account of the *Poissardes.*

CHAPTER III.

1790.

Fête of the Federation—The Church and the Army—Hesdin—Royal Champagne—Metz—Nancy—Final Departure of Necker—Resignation of Ministers.

"How delightful it is," says Sergent, "to call to mind those early days of the Revolution, when every one who had the means felt obliged to succour any fellow-citizen who was poor, oppressed, or miserable; when all men of heart throughout France were linked together, even though personally unknown to each other, in one universal brotherhood."

It was this feeling which found expression in the great *Fête* of the Federation on July 14th, the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille. It took place in the Champ de Mars, which was transformed into an arena for the occasion. All Paris assisted in the preparations. The 12,000 hired workers were not enough. Rich and poor, the fine lady by the side of the *grisette*, noble priests and artisans, with citizens still lower in the scale, all lent a hand, some marching from the different sections to the sound of military music, others singing *Ça ira* with all their might. From every quarter of France the delegates streamed in; the Federates from the departments were received as honoured guests, and the best of everything provided for them. Paris was overflowing.

On the great day the skies alone refused to join in the general rejoicing. Torrents of rain drenched the banners, spoiled the gala dresses, and turned the turf seats into mud banks; nevertheless the people joined hands and danced merrily round the high altar erected in the middle, where Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun—most unclerical of priests—was to celebrate high mass, and to administer the oath of fidelity to the nation, the king, and the constitution. Three hundred priests, in white surplices and tricolor sashes, stood at the four corners of the altar. An awning sheltered the place reserved for the king, the queen, and the Court; on the right of the king sat the President of the National Assembly, with the deputies on each side. In addition to the 300,000 spectators, the vast space contained 50,000 armed men, 14,000 of whom were the National Guards from the departments.

When the mass was over, the bishop blessed the oriflamme and the other dripping banners, then Lafayette was carried by his grenadiers to the altar and took the oath, followed by the whole body of Federates; next came the President and the deputies; lastly, Louis XVI. himself, who swore to maintain and be faithful to the constitution. The queen even caught the enthusiasm, for, raising the dauphin in her arms, and presenting him to the people, she exclaimed, "Here is my son; he joins as well as myself in these expressions." Cries of *Vive le Roi, la Reine, et le Dauphin*, rent the air, mingled with salvos of artillery; the rain ceased, and the sun burst from the clouds in all its splendour. This day was the culminating point in Lafayette's fortunes; henceforward his star, like that of Necker (which was already far on the wane), was to decline. The festivities were prolonged for some days. On the site of the hated Bastille a ball was held; all Paris was

illuminated, and a new era of universal peace and goodwill seemed to be inaugurated. Such fervour, however, was not destined to last. Already there were serious religious troubles. Revolutions do not fill the exchequer, and the patriotic gifts were only drops in the ocean. Necker proposed to sell the crown domains, and a great portion of the estates of the Church, and to add the proceeds to the Caisse d'Escomptes. The property of the clergy and of many of the nobles being sequestered, promissory notes, secured on the lands which had thus accrued to the nation, were issued to serve instead of money. This was the famous system of *assignats*. In the end, the over-issue of these notes left them unredeemable and worthless. Even in the beginning, according to Sergent, they did not quite answer their purpose.

[1] "The first *assignats* put into circulation by the Assembly were notes of 1000 francs down to 100 francs. A workman who received one of these in payment could not cash it. He might die of hunger with it in his pocket, and if he tried to change it he had to set to work secretly, and besides, to lose a considerable percentage. I proposed to my section to set up a bank of exchange, at which, by means of a certificate from the president, a poor man might convert his *assignats* into money without any percentage. The rich inhabitants supported this bank until the Government issued smaller notes. There was no other such establishment in Paris! As I like to give just praise, and to record the names of good men, I wish to do homage to the memory of M. Gobillat, a shopkeeper in the Rue St. Denis.

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

He was pious without ostentation, a father and a friend to the poor. He was the first subscriber to this establishment, and its treasurer. When he had no more funds he gave his own money rather than send away a petitioner. Was not this man a true patriot?"

This wholesale confiscation of property set the clergy (who in the beginning had sided with the *Tiers Etat*) in antagonism to the Revolution, and they endeavoured to hamper its course. The State also took upon itself the civil administration of the Church, and claimed the power of appointment to bishoprics and all other benefices. The king referred the matter to the Pope, who refused his consent, and later on a complete schism took place. The Assembly decreed that all ecclesiastics who refused the oath to the Constitution should be deprived of their benefices. Only three bishops took the oaths; the rest were deprived of their sees, and the new bishops were consecrated by Talleyrand.

The clergy were divided into juring and nonjuring; the latter, retaining their allegiance to Rome, were bitterly persecuted. Many convents were suppressed by the Government, and the monks and nuns turned adrift. Sergent denies that any cruelty was used.

[1] "The nuns were not torn from their convents. The decree abolishing vows for life suppressed the religious observances in convents, but allowed the nuns either to return to the world or remain in the convent, provided that there were a sufficient number left to form a community. After reading the decree to them, the municipal officers announced

[1] From Sergent's notes on Norvins' *History of France.*

that those who wished to return to the world should have a small pension paid by the State. By far the greater number hastened to avail themselves of their liberty; many married. None were thrown upon the world except some old women who had no relatives, or who were repulsed by the avarice or cold selfishness of their families."[1]

Almost all the rank and file of the army were ardent partisans of the Revolution. There was a great difficulty under the old *régime* in finding employment for the young nobles, and the army was the most honourable, indeed almost the only, career open to them. The pressure was so great that it was necessary to prove four hundred years of nobility to obtain a commission. Non-commissioned officers had no hope of rising, and everywhere there were arrears of pay. No sooner did the Revolution break out, than, as we have seen, the soldiers fraternized with the mob. The Marquis de Bouillé, Lafayette's cousin, was the virtual head of the army, he was devotedly attached to the king, and it was long before he could prevail on himself to take the constitutional oath. He was, notwithstanding, an advocate for reform, and the ascendancy of a strong and noble character gave him great influence over his troops. To prevent them from joining with the mob, he continually shifted their quarters; for, as the most ultra-democratic of all the historians of this period, Cabet, a partisan of Marat and Robespierre and the Terror, says—"The Left and the Jacobins, the people and the *bourgeoisie*, neglected no means of communicating

[1] See the *Journal* kept in Paris during the Revolution by Dr. Moore, for the distress this measure occasioned. It must be remembered that these poor nuns had given all their money to their convents, consequently they were destitute.

and fraternizing with the army, of organizing secret societies and federations within its ranks, to point out its interests and its rights, to direct its movements, and excite it to make common cause against its generals and the aristocracy."[1]

The regiment Royal Champagne, which formed the garrison of Hesdin, refused to receive a sub-lieutenant who was unpopular. The soldiers were still further exasperated by not being included in a banquet given by their officers. Their conduct was so riotous that the officers took possession of the regimental chest, and established themselves in the Hôtel de Ville. The Municipality decided that the Royal Champagne was to be disbanded, whereupon the regiment appealed to the National Assembly. Sergent undertook to advocate their cause.

[2] "Sixty soldiers and non-commissioned officers of the regiment Royal Champagne were disbanded in the most atrocious manner at Hesdin, because they had written and signed an address to the National Assembly. They took refuge in Paris, where they were entire strangers; no one would receive them. Some of them arrived in the district over which I presided, and I was told their story. I questioned them; truth and grief spoke in their accents. I became their defender. I roused the district; the men were welcomed; the inhabitants offered to lodge one, two, or three, according to their means; I set the example, and each of the sixty soldiers had a home and a friend. Two months afterwards I obtained justice for them from the National Assembly, and a decree was issued

[1] *Cabet*, vol. i. p. 499; an ultra-republican history.
[2] Memoir written in 1801.

re-establishing their honour and restoring their rank in the army. Four of them attained afterwards the rank of general—Davoust, who commanded the cavalry in Egypt, Argot and Point who perished in Italy. This affair made Robespierre my enemy. He was a member of the Assembly, and hoped that he alone would influence his colleagues in favour of these soldiers. The military committee, which was composed among others of Menou, Broglie, Noailles, Dubois de Crancé, and Beauharnais, having warned me that Robespierre in speaking on this affair would probably cause the Assembly to postpone it by moving the order of the day, I undertook to persuade him myself not to appear in the tribune. I irritated by this means his vanity so much that he never forgave me.

"The discontent prevailing in the army at this time alienated the soldiers from their officers. Muscar, a sergeant in the grenadier regiment Vivarais, prevented his corps from emigrating along with their colonel. He was arrested by the king's orders, and in spite of his appeals to the Assembly he was dragged from fortress to fortress, kept in secret confinement, but always pitied and beloved even by the governors of the citadels in which he was confined; at last he was forgotten. A letter from him reached me; I undertook his defence, and I obtained his liberty under the ministry of M. de Grave, who succeeded to M. Latour du Pin. Muscar became a general, and is at this moment (1801) in command at Ostend."

At Metz, Bouillé's head-quarters, there was a serious

mutiny, but it was quelled without bloodshed. The outbreak at Nancy was much more formidable. It was garrisoned by the regiment du Roi, the cavalry Mestre-de-Camp, and the Swiss Châteauvieux, a regiment which had already distinguished itself by refusing to fire on the 14th July, 1789, and thereby causing the fall of the Bastille. As usual, the demand was for arrears of pay; and the Assembly, at Lafayette's instigation, sent a commissioner, General Malseigne, to examine into the matter and settle accounts. This dilatory proceeding did not satisfy Châteauvieux, *Jugez tout de suite*, they exclaimed, and hustled and imprisoned Malseigne when he attempted to leave the town in disgust. Bullying and threats were exchanged on all sides, the soldiers were in full revolt, the peaceable citizens were in consternation, and the Assembly ordered Bouillé to advance upon Nancy and enforce obedience to law. He marched from Metz supported by his repentant garrison; the National Guard also volunteered to join, and on the 31st of August he was near Nancy when he received a deputation from the Municipality and the garrison. He required that the garrison should leave the city, and that Malseigne should be set free. On coming within thirty paces of the walls he was informed that the soldiers were leaving the town. All was on the point of terminating peaceably when shots were fired. No one could tell on which side they began. Bouillé's troops believed themselves betrayed, and forced their way in amidst fire and smoke and grape-shot. A murderous battle lasting for three hours ensued. Bouillé lost forty officers and five hundred men, half Châteauvieux was killed, the regiment du Roi yielded trembling and repentant; their young Captain Désilles perished in the first onslaught in his heroic attempt to prevent bloodshed; Mestre-de-Camp fled. Nancy suffered the penalties of a city taken by storm, and a fearful massacre took

place. The fear of anarchy was nevertheless so great, that the king, the Assembly, and the whole of the Royalist and moderate party publicly thanked Bouillé, and there was an end of mutinies for a time. The Jacobin party was furious. Loustalot, the editor of the *Révolutions de Paris*, is said to have died of grief. The affair was ever after called by them the massacre of Nancy.

The story is thus told by Sergent—

[1] "The régiment de Châteauvieux, animated by republican principles, was the victim chosen to avenge the defection of the others which was called insubordination. Bouillé marched against them. The inhabitants of Nancy opposed the entrance of his troops, and refused the condition imposed by him—to yield up the principal chiefs of Châteauvieux. Such was the report of the commissioners sent to Nancy. Some time afterwards I saw admitted into the Electoral Assembly a deputation from Brest, who asked for the *justification*, not the pardon, of the Swiss Châteauvieux, who were chained to the galleys and the victims of an odious persecution. A *fête* was celebrated when these victims came to thank the Assembly. It was organized by Collot d'Herbois, and paid for by the sections. M. de Lafayette, Bouillé's cousin, proposed to the National Guard a funeral *fête* in the Champ de Mars in honour of young Désilles and other citizens who perished in this affair. The sections deliberated on this proposal, and sent commissioners to Nancy to ascertain the truth.

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

"Five sections approved of the *fête* as proposed by Lafayette; forty-three approved for the memory of Désilles, of the National Guards, and of the soldiers, without excepting Châteauvieux. No thanks were voted to M. de Bouillé. Lafayette tried to justify his cousin, and accused the soldiers. The commissioners (I was one) replied that their business was not to discuss but to deliver the decision of their sections. A message was brought to M. de Lafayette, who was president, that M. de Gouvion, the chief of the staff of the National Guard, had fainted away on hearing that his brother had been killed while fighting under Bouillé. Lafayette retired to console his friend. The Assembly chose another president, and went on with the sitting. The *fête* was ordered according to the wish of the forty-three sections, and presided over by Lafayette, who, however, was much annoyed by the arrival of the Gardes Françaises, who had refused to fire on the people. M. de Lafayette ordered them to retire; but he was opposed, and these regiments remained to take part in the *fête*, as well as the Swiss Châteauvieux, who came to thank the Assembly on this occasion."

On the 8th September, Necker left Paris. He had lost the confidence of all parties. The king distrusted him on the one side, and the Republicans on the other, and he felt that he could serve France no more. Foreseeing that the excessive issue of *assignats* would in the end prove ruinous, he left two million francs of his own private fortune in the hands of the exchequer. He went with a broken heart, escaping

almost as a criminal along the road where he had been so lately carried in triumph. At Arcis-sur-Aube he was arrested, but the Assembly ordered him to be set at liberty, and at length he reached Switzerland, where he spent the remainder of his life. His colleagues resigned two months afterwards. Sergent was one of the principal agitators for their dismissal.

[1] "The ministers La Tour du Pin, Champion, and St. Priest lost the confidence of part of the Assembly. Menou was ordered to report on their conduct, but the light in which he put it caused the accusation to be withdrawn. Entirely of my own accord, independent of all external influence, I revived the question. I possessed documents telling against them, which I published, and the majority of the Communal Assemblies voted for presenting an address to the National Assembly, declaring that these ministers had violated the constitution, and thus lost the confidence of the people. I was the spokesman for the deputation. I laid on the president's desk two *lettres de cachet*, signed by the king, and countersigned by the ministers Latour du Pin and St. Priest, posterior to the law sanctioned by the king suppressing for ever these arbitrary letters. Champion (*garde des sceaux*) continued to register laws in these terms—'Louis, by the grace of God, King of France, &c.,' instead of this formula ordered by the constitution—'In the name of the nation, the king, and the law, Louis King of the French ordains.' My address was brought before two committees, who reported on it

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

to the Assembly, and my facts were so incontestable that a day was fixed for presenting a petition declaring that these ministers had lost the confidence of the Assembly. The Court heard of it, and before the appointed day the king wrote to say that the ministers had resigned."

The Assembly itself was losing its influence; its power was passing over to the clubs.

CHAPTER IV.

1789—1792.

The Jacobin Club—Branches in the provinces—Duke of Orleans had no influence—Deterioration in 1791—Evil influence of Marat and Robespierre—The Girondins—The Cordeliers—Lafayette—Danton—Petitions—Deterioration of the Cordeliers.

THE first institution which took the name of a *club*, in accordance with the Anglomania prevalent in the early days of the Revolution, was the *Breton*. It was formed by the deputies from Brittany, and joined by Sièyes, Mirabeau, Bailly, and others of similar opinions.

After October 1789, when the Assembly came to Paris, the Breton club also migrated, and called itself the "Association of the Friends of the Constitution." The ancient convent of the Frères Jacobins was appropriated to its use; hence the name by which it became so famous. It gradually became more and more popular, or revolutionary, and it was forsaken by Lafayette, La Rochefoucauld, and others, who founded in April 1790 the club of 1789, on the plan of the original Breton club. This institution did not live long; it merged into the Feuillants, so called from the convent in which it met, and was the headquarters of the Constitutional or Moderate party. There were other conservative and Royalist clubs

formed by the *Côté Droit*, but the people would not allow them to continue; even the Feuillants was closed in 1791.

In French political language the Right, the *Côté Droit*, always means the Conservative, and the Left, or *Côté Gauche*, the Liberal party. These were again subdivided into three shades of opinion, so that the *Côté Droit* included the extreme Royalists as well as the moderate Constitutionalists, while in the extreme Left there were moderate reformers as well as furious revolutionists, called in those days the *Montagne*, as they sat very high up on the left of the President of the Assembly. Among these was Sergent. The following is his description of the clubs—

[1] "However great the horror with which many writers have endeavoured to surround the name of Jacobin—a name long borne without shame by men of acknowledged merit, whose virtues have left honourable traces in the memories of their grateful countrymen—I do not hesitate to own that in 1790 I was a member of this society. I am even proud of it, for I was elected without solicitation, without being subjected to the formality of presentation. It included at that time Montmorency, Lafayette, Noailles, Broglie, Talleyrand, Mirabeau, La Rochefoucauld, Thouret, Cannes, Grégoire, Beauharnais, Dupont, Barnave, Lepelletier, Chapelier, Bailly, the Lameths, Pétion, Buzot, &c.

"Robespierre had not yet taken possession of the tribune; his diffuse, ill-written, declamatory speeches

[1] From Sergent's introduction to his notes on various histories of the Revolution.

did not yet lay down the law; he was listened to because the purity of his principles was respected, and rightly *at that time.*

"In this august assembly the discussions on the laws and the interests of the people were carried on with calm, and with complete freedom of approval or disapproval; there was more dignity than was often to be found in the National Assembly, because there was no opposition inspired by personal interests and passions. The members were all agreed as to principles, they differed only as to means. These discussions were always on the questions at that time before the National Assembly. Those deputies who did not care to proclaim their opinions in the National Tribune, or who did not feel strong enough to withstand the noisy interruptions which were too frequent, the rude apostrophies mingled with unjust suspicions, were able in the Jacobin club to state quietly their opinions and their explanations, and also to communicate their correspondence with the departments, which they could not do in the Assembly, where often the fact reported by the committees contradicted the instructions they had received from the authorities in the departments, and even from the affiliated clubs. It was sometimes impossible to conceive that anything great, noble, or good could come out of the constituent or National Assembly, when one witnessed the tumultuous, indecent scenes which went on; and what is most extraordinary is, that these coarse interruptions always came from the *Côté Droit,*

where sat the men who were considered the ornaments of French society, who presented themselves to the whole world as models of politeness and of good taste. Many histories contain descriptions of the disgusting scenes in which figured Mirabeau Tonneau (the brother of the great orator), Jaucourt, Maury, since Cardinal. I have seen this priest, forgetting his powerful eloquence and persuasive logic, descend to trivial personalities and gestures so ignoble that one would have punished them with a kick in the lowest vagabond of the street.

"The object of the debates in the Jacobins was to induce the deputies who were members of the club to remain united in defence of the opinions promulgated in this preparatory arena; sometimes the orators chosen were likely to influence the Assembly on the morrow. Who would dare to call such conferences blamable?—for they did not pretend to be more than conferences.

"The reader must not lose sight of the fact that I am speaking of this famous club only at the period when I entered it in 1790. When we consider its character at a later date, we must remember that in human things good quickly turns to evil, that the best intentions become corrupt just as the most exquisite fruits become poisonous when they are left to rot upon the tree.

"It has been imputed as a crime to this noble and useful institution that it extended its branches from Paris to every town in the kingdom; that it kept

up with these branches (which gave to it the name of the mother society) a system of blind obedience. What was there criminal in this affiliation of men who were invested with the confidence of the people? The deputies from the provinces corresponded with the authorities in the towns which had elected them, sent them reports not only of the transactions of each day, but also of their own impressions and opinions, which otherwise would have remained unknown under the shelter of a white or black ball. It was their duty to throw the light of truth on the events taking place in the capital, certain that opposing interests would envelop these events with thick clouds so as to hide their origin and effect from distant spectators. Those citizens who lived at the furthest extremities of France put their whole confidence in their deputies, and thus the force of each individual Will served to make up the aggregate which stirred the nation.

"In every town, in every village, the arrival of the messenger from Paris was eagerly looked for day by day. Any concealment would give rise and circulation to panics, which, as we know from sad experience, may have fatal consequences. The deputy's packet arrived, and was too often accompanied by mischievous newspapers, incendiary pamphlets, and private letters which fed distrust and disorder. The deputy's letter, calculated to neutralize their poison, was often read only in the family circle or the study of some official who was regarded with suspicion. The people

becoming uneasy filled the streets. Excited by the sect called *Alarmists*, their curiosity unsatisfied, the masses were sometimes guilty of excesses which certain writers attributed to mysterious bribes supplied by the Duke of Orleans, or by the Jacobins, and even by the *poor* Cordeliers (I say poor in every sense of the word, for I have never known one of them able to live without work). The only remedy was publicity, and the only means of employing it was to collect at a given hour, when the work of the day was over, in some public place, as many honest, irreproachable citizens as possible, to receive the communications, to hear the new laws, and the explanations of the motives of the Assembly. After reading them, as the hour was not late, the fathers of families did not at once separate as if they had been listening to a sermon (of which indeed one does not think much after leaving church). An immediate and personal interest gave great importance to these communications. In every mind ideas sprang up; they fermented, an explosion was imminent, for the questions touched all interests present and future. In such an assembly there will be some men in whom all have confidence, who are well known for their wisdom and political knowledge; all will turn to these and press them with questions on the information just received, some will make objections to their answers, all speak together, and then ensues general confusion. It is thus that a club is formed. Soon there will be a president to keep order; next a tribune for the

speakers. Curiosity began, ambition and vanity finish, the institution.

"The movement originated by the Breton club in the centre soon spread to the uttermost parts of the kingdom. The next want felt was that of affiliation; general interest soon supplied the link. Why, then, when all can be so naturally explained, attribute an institution, which arose freely, without any sort of mystery, to intrigue, to the infernal machinations of the Duke of Orleans and others? No doubt the idea of certain writers bore fruit; the pictures they drew of the horrors endured for two centuries by the slavery imposed upon a large majority by a very small minority, excited the public mind.

"Many writers have asserted that this society, to which they give the name of a pestilential den, was directed from the first by the Duke of Orleans. By what means could he rule it? By his eloquence? To sway such an assembly, to govern a party, he must have equalled or even surpassed Mirabeau, Sièyes, Lally Tollendal, Clermont Tonnerre, Bailly, &c. Was the Duke of Orleans ever heard to lift up his voice in any tribune, either in the National Assembly or the Jacobins? Did his influence rest upon his moral character or his habits? In these respects he resembled the majority of our sovereigns whom history has adorned with pompous titles, although public opinion branded them with contempt. A leader of men cannot help being conspicuous even if prudence induces him to retire from publicity, yet

while I was a member of the club no one appeared to be aware that the duke sat on its benches. Perhaps the cause was his immense wealth? How can one believe that the eminent and respectable men who formed the club, and supported it by their presence in the early days of the Revolution, would have consented to be in the pay of a prince whose character would never bear the strain of great trials? I was supposed to belong to the Orleans faction, and I was in consequence exposed in 1789 to the daggers of another party. I declare once more, as I did at that time, that I spoke to the duke only twice; the first time at the end of 1791, and the second when we met in the court of the Manège leading to the Assembly. No one ever addressed any proposal to me from him or in his favour, although I was in the habit of seeing Laclos, Sillery Genlis, and Brissot. I have often had to defend myself against this accusation, and this is what I have answered—'Do you think me a madman or an idiot?—for I should be the one or the other if I were capable of serving the purposes of a usurper. Whoever either from ambition or cupidity helps Philippe to seat himself on the throne by deposing the present occupier signs at the same time his own death-warrant, for the new sovereign would be a fool if he did not get rid immediately of his accomplices by the scaffold or by poison. Of his son, the Duc de Chartres,[1] I have a very different opinion. He was one of the censors

[1] Louis Philippe.

of the club. I said to the Convention, 'The Republic need fear no one except young Egalité; he has qualities which inspire affection; he is moral. If he becomes a good soldier he will be king some day.'

"I have promised to tell all I saw; I will finish the history of the Jacobin club. The permanent assemblies of the sections (at first called districts) contributed greatly towards increasing the number of members. Frequent communications took place by means of deputations. These deputations were invited to remain to the end of the sitting. Hence arose a strong desire on their part to sit permanently in an assembly where they might hear the great questions which stirred the public mind freely discussed. Some again coveted this right from motives of vanity. To be the colleague of Mirabeau and of Barnave, to sit by them every evening, gave a certain importance at the assemblies of the sections and in the *cafés* of the Palais Royal. It was a fine thing to say, 'I have just left the Jacobins.' A group was formed round the table of the new-comer, who while drinking his coffee contradicted the Marquis d'Aclanges, answered gravely Pelletier's keen sarcasms, or pedantically silenced St. Hurugue (all of whom were *habitués* of the *cafés* of the Palais Royal). The club itself sometimes singled out some members of the deputations whose reports were remarkable for their energy and perspicuity, and expressed a desire to include them among its members, and take advantage of the light they might throw on the discussions.

Lastly, friendship and relationship contributed to fill certain benches whence only applause and murmurs were heard. The original members could scarcely refuse to present a brother or an uncle. For this purpose there was a special committee, to which the demand was addressed. The proposer, on whom the responsibility rested, was called the Sponsor; the request had to be signed by four other original members. The committee made other inquiries respecting the candidate. Honesty and morality went for a great deal. If the inquiry proved favourable, a member of the committee read out the report at the opening of a sitting, and the president put the question of the candidate's admission to the vote. I never knew the society look for recruits, as some writers have said. I have often seen a candidate rejected. Perfect equality was the rule; the members had no privileges either as to speaking, or presiding, or serving on committees.

"I must say how I obtained admission. The Assembly of the district St. Jacques l'Hôpital ordered me to let the Jacobins know that they were about to present a petition to the National Assembly, in the name of the citizens of Paris, to obtain justice for the sixty soldiers of the Regiment Royal Champagne. I went to the club, and gave a circumstantial account of the affair. It was already well known that I had directed all the measures for establishing the defence. It was approved, and the members promised to unite all their efforts in the National Assembly against the

party opposing the petition. After the president had congratulated me on my work, a voice which was unknown to me asked for my admission as a member of the club, and was supported by many others. Some wished the request to be referred to the committee; two deputies from my native department, Péthion and Sièyes, demanded my admission on the spot. In spite of some objections founded on adherence to the regulations, my admission was put to the vote and I was received. I was never secretary, or censor, or even a member of any committee, and yet I was not forgotten and lost in the crowd.

"The library in which the meetings at first were held having become too crowded, they were transferred to a larger room on the ground-floor. The access was more convenient than that of the library, to which the only entrance was up a narrow staircase, quite sufficient probably for the monks, who did not crowd into this spot every day. It is strange that I never heard this library mentioned among the valuables preserved by the commission for the preservation of objects of art and science, of which I was a member for three years.

"It was now that the evil principle, which lies like a worm at the root of all human institutions, began to develop itself. In consequence possibly of too much laxity on the part of the corresponding committee in granting admission, the number of associates who contributed only their ears, and their hands (for the purpose of clapping, as Figaro said), was greatly

increased. Some indeed were hired, and exercised a powerful influence for success or failure. I am sure that a legion of such were introduced. Yes, there were agents who had mysterious salaries; some who were interested in destroying the society employed this easy and certain method. Their instructions were doubtless to form a band of clever, exaggerated patriots, supported by a chorus of strong, applauding voices, who cried out, 'To the vote; President, put it to the vote. Agreed!' Several members, whose names and wise principles honoured the society, when they found that the calm dignity which at first distinguished its meetings no longer prevailed, and that this Areopagus was gradually being changed into an arena, silently left it, and instituted a new patriotic club under the name of the club of 1789. The Jacobins tried to recall them, but they refused. The public, who saw among the seceding members such men as Bailly, Lafayette, and Sièyes, was not disturbed by the new club, although it appeared to be in opposition to the Jacobins, without, however, exhibiting any decided hostility. The club of 1789 had little influence on public opinion, because some of its members had lost the confidence of the people (such as Talleyrand and Régnaud de St. Jean d'Angély); but the effect on the National Assembly was different. A new standard was raised by the patriots, and every schism in an administrative body becomes fatal to the welfare of the public.

"Among those who remained in the Jacobins there were still a great many of the original Friends of the Constitution—*Amis de la Constitution*, who enjoyed the esteem of the nation—no one could refuse it to Pétion, Grégoire, Buzot, Rœderer, Lanjuinais, &c., &c. This club remained the only mother society of all those set up in the departments. It was nevertheless felt that the door had been opened too freely to candidates outside of the National Assembly; and after the flight of the king, who was stopped at Varennes, it became evident that tares had been sown among the wheat; to weed them out recourse was had to a dissolution of the society, which in separating appointed twelve commissioners with the power of recomposing it, and retaining all they cared to keep; all who did not present themselves at the office of these commissioners with a letter of recall were excluded. Six deputies and six other members were chosen by vote, and invested with this absolute power. I need only mention the names of Pétion, Grégoire, and Buzot (deputies), to show the sort of men who were chosen, and I may be allowed to pride myself on having been one of the six other members; I was fortunate in having for colleagues five who were equally respectable. Our task was executed conscientiously although rapidly, and we refused re-admission to many members who got in afterwards, and who by their subsequent conduct justified our severity. I must add that we did not exclude any of the deputies, and in this there was no favouritism;

and with regard to the others we listened to no solicitations or patronage. Order, dignity, and tolerance were the rule until the end of the Constituent Assembly. The galleries, erected to enable the meetings to be public, were filled with citizens who respected the society while they respected themselves, and who never disturbed the speakers by applause or murmurs. The system of accusation had not yet been introduced.

"The publicity of these meetings is a proof of the loyal purposes and pure intentions of the members. Crime is not born in the light; mystery and darkness are its essential conditions. But it is not in the nature of things to preserve their pristine purity; passions disturb, corrupt, and finally destroy institutions founded on wisdom and justice, and that were welcomed in their origin with enthusiasm.

"The Constituent Assembly had fulfilled its mission; almost all its members returned to their departments, and the Legislative Assembly, which took its place, sent many new members to the Jacobins. Some distinguished men soon made their mark, those, for instance, who were afterwards called the *Girondins*. These southerners surprised us all by their vivid imagination and burning eloquence. Isnard (deputy from the Var) seemed to surpass by many lengths the celebrated, the immortal, Mirabeau. The first time that he was heard in the Jacobins a tumult of applause from every part of the house spread to the galleries—all rules were broken through, and the

president's bell lost its power. . . . Even the censors clapped their hands. Robespierre had never achieved such a triumph; he trembled, for he had hoped (by remaining in Paris and obtaining the post of public accuser at the Tribunal of the Seine) to govern the Jacobins. He now saw round him formidable rivals. In ambition as well as in love, jealousy is akin to hatred, and the bilious temperament of the incorruptible deputy from Arras fed this passion; he never held out his hand to the new members. The struggle began. Robespierre rallied round himself his partisans, almost all of whom belonged to the club of the Cordeliers; many even were newspaper editors accustomed to fill their pages with his praises. Prudhomme, Fréron, Camille Desmoulins, and Gorsas strained every nerve to maintain him in the supremacy to which they had raised him—a supremacy which was as fatal to the nation as to his rivals, and even to his most ardent partisans. When a society splits up into parties it can no longer effect any good for the public. Hitherto unity had prevailed in the Jacobin club; an opposition now arose of conflicting interests. Some orators thought that in order to fight against the domination of the people's Tribune, it was necessary to acquire popularity at any price. Some of the members who were not deputies were put forward as a forlorn hope. The exaggeration of their opinions was taken for energy and self-devotion. The wise and prudent were crushed by their passionate vehemence, and called

themselves *Moderates*—a name which made many victims. Prudence soon excited distrust; it was not long before they were accused of treachery. The Robespierreists succeeded in raising suspicion as to the patriotism of those who had been members of the Constituent or of the Legislative Assemblies. Any one who thought certain proposals went too far, who did not welcome the ideas of the demagogues, who complained of the dangerous influence of the public galleries, all who contradicted those whom the Robespierreists called 'the true friends of the people,' were said to be no longer on the high level of the Revolution (*à la hauteur de la Révolution*). This phrase became popular, and drove many honest citizens to the scaffold.

"In the beginning of 1790 I quitted the district Mauconseil, of which I was president, and went to live in the arrondissement of St. André des Arcs. I had scarcely been there a month when I was inscribed on the list of *citoyens actifs*.[1] It was at first called the district of the Cordeliers, and afterwards the section of the Théâtre Français. I was appointed president of this district. The eyes of all Paris were fixed upon these assemblies which Danton, who presided over them in stormy times, had rendered celebrated. With the help, energy, and oratorical talent of some of the inhabitants and of some ardent journalists, he made this quarter near the Colleges of

[1] Those who could furnish a certain sum, or give three days' labour.

Law and Medicine (the *Pays Latin*) an asylum for democracy. Not satisfied with defending liberty by vehement triumphant oratory, he induced the National Guard of the section to swear to support the Cordeliers by force of arms. M. de Lafayette, the commander-in-chief, one day laid siege to the section. He blockaded it, and there was a parley. Danton, at that time president, replied by representing with dignity the strictly legal conduct of the section in opposing an arbitrary act on which the inhabitants would ask the National Assembly to pronounce sentence. The parliamentary officers, forgetting that they were citizens, proceeded to threats which excited violent murmurs in the section. The Assembly was sitting in the old Cordeliers' convent, which was filled to overflowing, and surrounded by an indignant crowd. The women, as usual under such circumstances, gave vent to their feelings in a way that was not inspired by prudence, and this exasperated the people still more.

"Danton, although feeling deeply the affront inflicted by these soldiers on citizens who were not subject to their jurisdiction, controlled himself so as to reply forcibly yet with dignity—

"'Gentlemen, your threats can have no effect upon citizens who have a legal right to be here, who are under the protection of the law, and who base their resistance upon justice. If we chose to oppose force by force, we should have only to sound the tocsin, and many allies would rush to defend us, even from

the most distant quarters. The whole Faubourg St. Antoine would hasten to assist the Cordeliers in upholding their legal independence. But I know the citizens over whom I have the honour of presiding; they hold civil war in abhorrence; it is by fraternizing that they wish to influence that portion of the National Guard which had been misled when sent in arms against us. Go and tell your chiefs that these are our resolutions; that we will never recognize a military power in this city unless it is supported by law.'

"The troops did not retire until an advanced hour in the night. But the Court and M. de Lafayette's advisers (among whom, even amidst his staff and his aides-de-camp, the public saw with pain men who deserved general contempt) denounced this apparent insurrection of the tribunal of the Châtelet. Danton was sentenced to be arrested; he was accused of having incited the citizens to civil war, and of having threatened to oppose the Faubourg St. Antoine to the National Guard.

"All the inhabitants of the arrondissement communicated with the other assemblies, and agreed to present a petition in the name of the majority of the sections to the National Assembly to obtain the suspension of this trial, and to submit the affair to the enlightened judgment of the members of the Assembly, as from its very nature it was unsuited to the civil jurisdiction of the Châtelet.

"At this time the right of individual or collective

petition was justly regarded as one of the principal foundations of liberty; it was considered sacred. The petitioners were authorized by a decree to present themselves at the bar of the Assembly and read their statement. They were listened to, and the President answered them regardless of the subject of the petition, if only it were couched in respectful terms worthy of the judges who represent the French nation; it was then sent to the committees, who never failed to make a report.

"A deputy of the Assembly of 1789, Cazalès (a noble who has never been accused of being an anarchist or demagogue, indeed quite the contrary, for he was one of the most courageous chiefs of the Right, and a distinguished orator), rose eagerly one day and reproached his colleagues with the clamour by means of which they overpowered the voice of the petitioners. 'Remember,' he said, 'that every citizen has a right to be heard, to announce his opinions and his claims in this spot. Our duty is to listen to everything, even to political heresies and follies, if they are expressed with due respect; the petitioners invoke the assistance of our judgment; not to listen to them is an insult, a dereliction of duty.' [The word insult was appropriate, for when reading a petition I was frequently interrupted by unseemly remarks on the part of contemptible outsiders.]

"The petition from the Cordeliers was supported by the report of the legislative committee, which after a severe examination declared that, first, the action

against the section of the Cordeliers was violent and arbitrary, consequently the employment of an armed force was illegal, and might occasion disturbances in the city; secondly, that there was no ground for accusing the President (Danton), who had only replied to threats by a hypothetical expression, '*if we chose*,' which, very far from expressing an intention, was on the contrary an hypothesis followed by the protest, 'but we do not intend to use these means of which we have described to you the dangerous consequences.' The procedure was annulled, as well as the decree against Danton. Some prejudiced minds will cry out against this decision, and call us revolutionists, anarchists, demagogues'—you may add brigands, whisper in my ear some fanatics who kindly place me in all those categories. I appeal in answer to the judgment of the National Assembly.

"After this defeat of an act of despotism on the part of military authority, the aides-de-camp of the General of the National Guard always passed through the populous district of the Cordeliers at full gallop, although they never were insulted, but they kept up their resentment against Danton and the club.

"The Court had secret partisans in the tribunals preserved by the Revolution, and also among the electors who formed the municipal administration. Among the police it had spies, who were men of distinction, always at its service; there were several in the famous district of which I have been speaking.

"The members of the club of the Rue Dauphine (the Cordeliers) admitted the talent displayed in the Jacobins, but thought them not energetic enough to vanquish the enemy common to both. 'They discuss when they ought to draw their swords,' said the Cordeliers. Distrust at length crept in among these ardent spirits, and suspicion as to the patriotism of some of the moderate members of the Jacobins and the honour and disinterestedness of their chiefs, Mirabeau, Talleyrand, Chapelier, the Lameths, who were often censured in the journals edited by the Cordeliers. Prudhomme, Camille Desmoulins, Fréron, Loustalot, Gorsas, took possession of the public mind. Marat, who was not admitted till 1792, by his '*Ami du Peuple*,' mounted the breach by the side of these champions of the Revolution; but he was admitted only as a forlorn hope, an undisciplined soldier to lead a desperate assault. He was supported as one who in fixing the petard to the fortress carries his life in his hands, a life of little value at any time. Many ambitious men no doubt saw in this club an open field in which they might earn fortune and distinction. For want of ability they took to exaggeration, which is too easily mistaken by the mob for strength and conviction. Who would dare to say positively that there were none of these men sent by the enemy, who under perfidious masks learnt all the plans of the society, and endeavoured to disorganize it by throwing discredit on the community? On two occasions the club cast out a young writer who mani-

fested turbulent principles calculated to drag the people into excesses destructive to society.

"In the beginning the club counted among its members many estimable men who had attacked tyranny and the excesses of absolute power in their writings before even the people of Paris had thought of opposing them by force of arms. It is enough to mention the celebrated advocate Linguet, who was the first to lay the mine which overturned the Bastille, into whose dungeons he was plunged because he had the courage to sustain a just cause against a noble *protégé* of the Court. The name of Mercier, author with his brothers of the *Tableaux de Paris*, is in the register of the founders; that of the Englishman Routledge, who tried to set up in Paris a paper like Addison's *Spectator*, was also to be seen there. Although Routledge was not equal to Addison, the chatterbox (*Babillard*) of the Cordeliers was the work of a philosopher and a distinguished writer. Many of the members of the *Musée*, accustomed to make speeches in the same hall of the Rue Dauphine in which the Cordeliers assembled, passed from their own scientific and philosophical meeting to the political assemblies of these friends of liberty; a love for truth was in fact the mainspring of both.

"I insist upon these details, because I blush to hear so many bitter, passionate denunciations calculated to falsify for posterity an institution which will occupy so large a space in the world's annals. Let us try therefore not to transmit to our children a history

soiled by passion or falsehood. My readers may follow me with confidence. Remember that at the age of ninety-two illusion has ceased; remember that I shall soon leave this world to wait for the day of judgment; remember that I can have no possible interest in misleading. Even if I wished to do so in what would it profit me, who have only a few days to live?

"The same thing happened at the Cordeliers which afterwards broke up the Jacobins. The Republican system, introduced by literary men, became dominant. Equality being its basis, any man whose energy promised success to the cause was admitted too easily, —it was impossible to deny that this success was achieved more frequently by numbers than by reason —its members were therefore recruited from every class. Have we any right at the present day [1] to condemn such a system? We must remember how powerful were the enemies that those who in 1789 wished for the reform of abuses, and aspired to enjoy a wise liberty under the empire of law, had to combat. Long oppressed by the odious formula, 'For such is our good pleasure,' we had to organize an effectual resistance to tyranny. Was it not to be expected that the enemies of freedom would find support in foreign courts? In time of war the masses must be gained over, a compact union must be established; and this was the principle which created throughout France the institution of clubs."

[1] About 1843.

CHAPTER V.

1791.

Mirabeau—Vincennes—*Journée des Poignards*, Feb. 28—Death of Mirabeau, April 2—Court not allowed to go to St. Cloud—Varennes.

FOREMOST at the Jacobins, and in the Assembly, of which he was elected president on the 29th January, 1791 (a position which he held with admirable tact, and a power which only he could wield), Mirabeau was now unquestionably the first man in France. He was much too moderate for Sergent, who at this time was beginning to be listened to in the club. He seems to have come in contact with Mirabeau only once, on the occasion of the duel between Lameth and the Duc de Castries.

"I spoke," says Sergent, "in the Jacobins against this mania for duelling. Mirabeau approved of my speech, and said that I had left nothing for him to add."

It is doubtful whether Mirabeau would have been able to arrest the headlong course of the Revolution, while preserving, as he hoped, the salutary reforms that were needed. Nothing did him so much harm, in the opinion of the revolutionary party, as his acceptance of money from the Court. He did not consider it venal, for it did not influence his opinions or actions. He really believed in the possibility of

inducing the Court and the noblesse to accept the Revolution, and of governing the country himself through the king. Marie Antoinette was gained over by his eloquence as he was by her grace and high courage. His devotion to her was real, but his wants were enormous, and he could not refuse the means of gratifying them. When, therefore, he opened a magnificent hotel and displayed the most profuse luxury, the source of his newly found wealth was soon more than suspected, and the imputation was equally injurious to his reputation and to that of the Court.

A fervent disciple and professed believer in the doctrines of the Church of Rome, the adhesion Louis XVI. was forced to give to the new constitution of the clergy wounded deeply his sense of honour and his conscience. Henceforth it was impossible for him to hope to be in harmony with the Assembly, towards which he no longer felt responsible. He separated its cause from that of the nation; and his plan, in which he was secretly supported by Mirabeau, was to escape to Metz or some other strong place, collect round him all who were loyal to the crown, and issue thence a proclamation appealing to the nation, setting forth his ardent wishes for its welfare, exposing the ingratitude of the revolutionary party, and promising a new constitution in which the rights of all should be equally respected. Meanwhile, Mirabeau was to remain in Paris to control the Assembly, which was to dissolve and reconstruct itself in accordance with the new constitution. Lafayette knew nothing of these projects.

The Tuileries was carefully watched by the Revolutionists. On the 28th February, 1791, a country gentleman, M. de la Tonnelle, who was found loitering about the gardens, was taken up on suspicion, and a hunting-knife suspended to his waist was magnified into a poniard of a deadly description. On the very same day, which was ever afterwards called the

Journée des Poignards, an attack was made upon the Château de Vincennes, which the populace were told was being prepared by the Royalists as a successor to the Bastille.

This is Sergent's account—

[1] "On Monday, February 28th, the inhabitants of the district of the Bastille, Santerre at their head, were led by some agitators to destroy the towers of Vincennes. Part of the faubourg joined them. Lafayette was told of it in time. He ordered the drums to beat, and he led a detachment of the National Guards to protect Vincennes. It was with great difficulty that he persuaded the mob to stop their work of destruction; but while he was thus occupied an event of another kind was preparing at the Tuileries. A great many nobles from the provinces were at the Palace; some of them had the imprudence (for they were so sure of success) to insult the National Guards on duty, who, therefore, sent messengers to acquaint Lafayette with what was going on. He felt that he had been wilfully deceived when called outside the walls by the insurrection. Before nightfall he brought back in all haste the troops from Vincennes, directed them on the Tuileries so as to form a blockade, and on hearing from one of the officers of the National Guard an account of what had taken place, he went up into the royal apartments and told the king that he was surrounded by secret enemies, who were conspiring probably against his person, and that he intended to arrest all who were not in attendance upon

[1] From the memoir dictated in 1847.

him. Several gentlemen assembled in one of the rooms were immediately taken prisoners, and M. de Lafayette ordered the guards to search them for secret arms. They endeavoured to resist, but the king, intimidated by Lafayette, ordered them to submit for their own justification. In an instant every table, cabinet, and chair was covered with pistols, cartridges, and even daggers. The guards then, before the eyes of Lafayette, seized these poor gentlemen by the shoulders and kicked them downstairs, to the derision and amusement of the troops who surrounded the palace.[1]

"On the day before this took place, M. Sergent suspected from the tone of the newspapers that an event was preparing which would disturb the public tranquillity, and that money was being distributed; this could only be the work of the counter-revolutionists; he therefore summoned a meeting of the women's club, and entreated them to conjure their husbands, friends, and lovers not to quit their work on the following day. The women promised, and neither at Vincennes nor at the Tuileries was seen a single one of the men who were nicknamed the *Forts*."

The populace believed that the object of these *Chevaliers des Poignards* was to carry off the king. A decree against emigration happened to be brought forward in the Assembly on the very same day: it was proposed to set up a tribunal of three, who were to have the power of decreeing the civil death of all

[1] It is said that the king and queen never forgave Lafayette for this scene.

emigrants, and the confiscation of their property. Mirabeau rose to defend the cause of justice and liberty.

"I declare," he said, "that I should consider myself set free from any oath of allegiance towards those who would have the infamy to set up such a tribunal." Loud murmurs being heard on the Left—"Silence," he cried; "Silence, the thirty voices there!" and his indomitable energy and eloquence carried the day.

Great was the excitement outside; placards containing the account of the *Grande Trahison du Comte de Mirabeau* were hawked about the streets, and when at night he appeared at the Jacobins, "How dare he come to sit among us?" was the cry, and Lameth thundered against him in tones which he seemed to have borrowed, says Camille Desmoulins, from the great orator himself.

But Mirabeau had again the skill to turn by his eloquence his humiliation into a triumph. He concluded his speech with these words—"I will remain with you till you sentence me with ostracism," and applause broke forth from every corner of the hall. Not many more such victories were in store for Mirabeau. His haggard looks and sunken eyes proclaimed the mischief that was going on within. Worn out by incessant labour, dissipation, and excitement, the end for him was near.

On the 28th of March he took to his bed, never to rise again. He foretold the miseries which would befall France, torn by opposite factions, when the hand which alone had strength to govern them should be cold; and mingled with true patriotic regret were the vanity and sensuality which marred his career. His last words were, "Envelop me with perfumes and crown me with flowers, so does it befit us to enter upon eternal rest."[1]

[1] He died on April 2nd, 1791.

No one lamented his evil reputation more than he did himself. "If only I had the character of Malesherbes, I could do anything," he used to say; but he regretted his vices only in respect of the effect they produced on the world, and he valued morality and religion only for their influence.

All France mourned for him whilst lying on his deathbed. His funeral was conducted with more than royal pomp. Such universal grief had not been seen since the death of Louis XII. The Jacobins forgave him for having, by his unrivalled eloquence, passed the decree allowing the king an absolute veto, also for vesting in the crown the power of declaring war, likewise for his opposition to the decree forbidding emigration.[1] For a long time after he had disappeared from among them, the eyes of the Assembly turned in all difficult questions to the place he used to occupy. With him, as he had prophesied, the last hope of constitutional monarchy was ended.

The movements of the Court were now more jealously watched than ever. The royal family wished to pass Easter at St. Cloud. They were already in their carriages, but the people would not allow them to start.[2] In vain Lafayette, at the head of his grenadiers, harangued and threatened for an hour and three-quarters, the troops refused to act. Their Majesties were forced to alight and re-enter their palace, or rather prison. Lafayette in disgust threw up his command, but at the end of three days was induced by the entreaties of his guards to resume it.

Meanwhile the Court determined to fly. There was now no Mirabeau to help them, and they resolved to put themselves under the protection of Bouillé.

[1] Sergent was on the Jacobin side in all these questions.

[2] April 18th, 1791.

The queen had a devoted friend, a Swede, the chivalrous Comte de Fersen, and to him were entrusted most of the details of the plan. He procured a passport, made out in the name of the Baroness von Korf, travelling with her courier, governess, and two children, and had made by the queen's orders a huge yellow Berline, or travelling carriage; another carriage was to follow containing her waiting-women. The departure was fixed for the 20th June, but the illness of one of the women caused it unfortunately to be postponed to the 21st.

The queen could not understand life without the trappings of her rank. Months beforehand she ordered a magnificent dressing-case, inlaid with silver and ivory, and an elaborate trousseau for herself and her children. When the fatal evening came, the fugitives crept out in detachments from the palace. The king, in a brown wig and coat, holding the dauphin, dressed as a girl, by the hand, personated Durand the courier, while the queen was the governess, and Madame Elizabeth, the companion, of the Marquise de Tourzel—the pretended Baroness von Korf. The queen and her escort, M. de Valory, one of the *gardes du corps*, missed their way, and instead of turning to the left down the Carrousel to the Rue de l'Echelle, where a hackney coach driven by M. de Fersen was waiting for them, went to the right over the Pont Royal, and lost themselves for an hour in the Rue du Bac. On their way back they met M. de Lafayette in his coach, preceded by torches, and had just time to conceal themselves under an archway. The queen could not resist striking the wheels of his carriage with her "Badine," a long stick which it was the fashion for ladies to carry. At length they joined the rest of the family, who were in mortal anxiety on her behalf. M. de Fersen did not know Paris well, and missed his way, and more precious time was lost. At the Porte St. Martin

they found the huge yellow Berline which attracted all eyes.[1]

One of the *garde du corps* galloped on in advance, another galloped by the side, while a third sat on the box—all in bright yellow liveries. In spite of delays and blunders, they reached St. Menehould, a village about 170 miles from Paris. They were beginning to think themselves safe, and were enjoying the air and sunshine, the peaceful sights of the country, and the freedom of which they had so long been deprived, and they neglected the requisite precautions. The postmaster's son, Drouet, had been present at the *fête* of the Federation on the 14th of July, 1790, and he was struck by the resemblance of the Baroness von Korf's courier to the king, who in spite of his pretended condition travelled in the place of honour, while the Baroness sat with her back to the horses. The supposed governess, too, looked out, and bowed with a grace and dignity peculiar, as the writers of that day say, to Marie Antoinette. Drouet did not venture to stop them, but he set out with a companion, Guillaume, on two fleet horses by a cross-road to Varennes, which he reached long before the lumbering Berline. A faithful dragoon suspecting mischief followed him with a loaded pistol, but Drouet, who knew the road far better than his pursuer, plunged into a wood and escaped.

Varennes is a small town astride upon the Aire. It had been arranged that fresh horses should be waiting in the upper part of the town, on the right bank. M. de Goguelat, however, thinking that it would be safer not to attract attention before the carriages crossed the bridge, posted the relay in the lower town. The king had not been informed

[1] Madame de Tourzel, in her *Memoirs*, says that there was nothing unusual in this carriage; also that if she had been asked to give up her place to a more useful person, she would have willingly done so.

of this, and sought earnestly from door to door in the upper town for the expected relay. None of course was to be found, and the postillions were with difficulty persuaded to go on. At the same moment a horseman galloped past. "Postillions," he cried, "stop in the name of the nation; you are conveying the king." It was the terrible Drouet who had roused the municipality and rode on to stop the fugitives by overturning a huge waggon under the archway of a tower which commanded the entrance of the bridge. Against this obstacle the carriage came to a sudden standstill. "Your passports," demanded Drouet, and the queen gave him that of the Baroness von Korf with a steady hand. "Make haste," she said, "we are anxious to get on." But Drouet, who by this time was reinforced by several patriots, was in a position to command. He ordered the travellers to repair to the house of the Procureur syndic of the commune. This man, Sausse, a grocer, received the fugitives with politeness, but asked them to wait for a short time in his house while their horses were fed; in reality until a sufficient number of patriots should collect to enable him to stop their flight effectually.

The tocsin was sounding, and the National Guards arriving from every quarter. The Procureur pointed to an engraving on the wall. "Sire," he said, "this is your portrait." The king sought to dissemble no longer. "Yes, I am your king," he said, "and I implore you to save my wife and my children. Let me go to Montmédy. I do not wish to leave the kingdom." All he could obtain was a request from Sausse that he would wait till the next morning.

Meanwhile the queen was trying to soften the heart of Madame Sausse. In vain she appealed to her feelings as a wife and mother. "Every woman

for her own husband," was the reply; "you think of the king, I think of M. Sausse."

M. de Choiseul and M. de Goguelat arrived with their hussars. They were allowed to see the king. They implored him to mount on horseback with the dauphin in his arms, followed by the queen and the rest of the royal party. They swore to surround them with troops to protect their escape. But it was not in the nature of Louis XVI. to run such risks; besides, he was expecting Bouillé and his soldiers, and he hoped at any rate to be allowed to go away in the morning.

But the morning brought, not Bouillé, but the young Romœuf, Lafayette's aide-de-camp, bearing the decree from the Assembly to stop the flight of the royal family. The young man was devoted to Marie Antoinette, and it was with deep grief that he fulfilled his mission. When he presented the decree to her she refused to take it, and he laid it on the bed in which the royal children were sleeping. The queen tore it off, saying that it should never pollute her children's bed, and she bitterly reproached Romœuf. "Would you rather, Madame," he replied, drawing near and speaking in a low voice, "that another than I should witness your emotion?" She then checked her indignation and resumed the dignity befitting her rank, which she retained all through the painful scenes that followed.

The revolutionary party, Sergent among them, believed that Lafayette had connived at the flight of the king.

[1] "The Primary Assemblies for naming the electors were being held in Paris at this time. I was president of that of the Théâtre Français when the news of the flight of the king became known. The

[1] From Sergent's notes on Norvins' History.

result of the deliberation in our Assembly was to cast great suspicion on Bailly and Lafayette; the same idea was entertained in the National Assembly. M. de Gouvion, a friend of General Lafayette, was sent for to answer for the general's conduct at the bar of the Assembly. His explanations were not satisfactory. Danton invited Lafayette to answer for himself at the Jacobins. He excused himself till the next day on account of business, but he never reappeared at the Jacobins; he attached himself to the club of 1789."

The dreary journey back to Paris in the midst of a hostile population was like a funeral procession. The heat and dust were stifling, and the carriages went at a foot's pace to keep pace with the National Guard.

On the 23rd, between Châlons and Epernay, they were met by Pétion, Barnave, and Latour-Maubourg, the commissioners sent by the Assembly. They did not reach Paris until the 25th. It was during this journey that Barnave, touched by the grace, dignity, and misfortunes of the royal family, treated them with a consideration which won the confidence of the queen. Henceforth he did his best to save the monarchy. Pétion, on the other hand, thought it his duty to prove the staunchness of his principles by the vulgarity of his actions, and at the same time he fancied that the pious Princess Elizabeth was captivated by his personal charms. He says in his *Memoirs* that "if we had been alone she would have listened to the voice of nature, and have let herself fall into my arms!"

The royal carriages were followed by an open phaeton in which sat Drouet crowned with laurels, the hero of the hour.

Sergent witnessed the entry, and defends his friend and fellow-townsman, Pétion.

[1] "The king did not complain of his rudeness; all he said of Pétion was that 'he was an ardent republican.' The commissioners were not desired to humiliate the royal family, but to protect them on the journey. The most popular men were chosen in order to insure their safety. I myself witnessed only what went on in Paris, where an immense crowd filled the streets up to the barriers, and even beyond them; and to the gate of the Tuileries. The staff of the National Guard, with some of Lafayette's aides-de-camp, rode far in front of the carriages, and called out to the double ranks of citizens on either side—'No cries, citizens; keep silence and remain covered.' I affirm that this order was executed *majestically.* I followed the procession from the barriers. Believe in me, dear reader; I speak only of what I saw myself. I was an actor in these scenes, as every one knows, at the expense of my fortune and at the risk of my life."

But the looks of the crowd which surrounded the carriages when they stopped at the gate of the Château were so menacing that the queen refused to alight until the rest of the family were in safety. Two nobles who had embraced liberal opinions—M. M. de Noailles and d'Aiguillon—sought to cover her with their popularity; they almost carried her through the scarcely suppressed imprecations of the people into the palace.

So ended the last attempt on the part of the king

[1] From Sergent's notes on *Histoire d'un Demi Siècle.*

to escape from the net which was being drawn more and more closely round him. It succeeded so nearly, the incidents were so romantic, and the issues so momentous, that, often as the story has been told, one reads it with never-failing interest, and an intense desire that the end had been different. Still if Louis XVI. had reached Bouillé's army in safety, and been brought back by foreign powers, who can say what cruel reprisals might have been taken in the name of one who recoiled from bloodshed? Deficient in the qualities required by a leader of men, with a feeble will except where his conscience was touched, and an undeveloped intellect, Louis XVI. yet possessed in an eminent degree the virtues of forbearance, generosity, passive courage, and endurance. He never trembled like Robespierre, or stormed with impotent rage like Danton, nor could he have been frightened into butchery like the actors in the "Terror." Adversity brought to light his noble qualities, and it was from his enemies that he received the only crown he was fitted to wear, the crown of martyrdom.

CHAPTER VI.

CHAMP DE MARS.

1791.

Fermentation in the minds of the people—The Right refuses to speak or vote—Apotheosis of Voltaire—The Champ de Mars, July 17th—End of the Constituent Assembly.

After his return from Varennes the king fell into a state of profound dejection. For days he would not speak, until at last the queen threw herself at his feet, and implored him to rouse himself for her and their children's sake. Although the anguish of that dreadful night had turned her hair to silver, her spirit was unbroken. She placed in Barnave the confidence she had formerly had in Mirabeau, and for hours would stand holding ajar the door of a little room in the corridor of the Tuileries, waiting for a chance of speaking to him as he passed. These interviews were difficult to obtain. Barnave feared to be suspected of complicity with the Court, and both the king and queen were narrowly watched. At night a faithful waiting-woman drew her couch between the open door and the queen's bed to insure some degree of privacy for her mistress. One night she woke up, and saw a strange man leaning over the bed. It was the guard who, observing that the queen was awake, came to give his advice as to the course to be pursued.

While treated as a prisoner and a criminal the king was still supposed to reign, although his power

was suspended. An ingenious fiction was invented that he had not willingly fled, but had been carried off by the enemies of the Revolution. Even the most extreme republicans had been frightened out of their wits by the flight of the king. They expected his return at the head of a victorious army composed of emigrants and foreigners, to be followed by a second massacre of St. Bartholomew. Marat wrote in the *Ami du Peuple* that he expected to be roasted in a hot oven. Robespierre announced in the Jacobins that he was prepared for instant death. "*Nous mourrons tous avec toi*," exclaimed Camille Desmoulins, bursting into tears, and "*Tous, tous*," resounded from every corner of the building.

During the five days of the king's absence, in the midst of all this agitation the Assembly preserved a majestic calm. "It deliberated," says Quinet, "ordered, and acted as one man."

Three members were deputed to wait on the king and queen after their return, and inquire into the reason of their flight. Their answers were dictated by Barnave. The king declared that he never had intended to go farther than Montmédy; that his eyes were now open to the real wishes of the nation, and that he was determined to support the Constitution. The queen, that nothing on earth could have prevented her going with her husband and children. On the whole their answers were favourably received by the Assembly. Still, as Sergent says—"The king's flight had caused a fermentation in every brain." The extreme Right, to the number of two hundred and ninety, among whom were Maury, Montlosier, and other men of power and influence, separated their cause from that of the Constitutionalists, and declared that in the present state of affairs they would take no part in political questions; they would continue to sit in the Assembly, but

would neither vote nor speak. Thus an immense power was thrown into the hands of the Left.

While the extreme Right stood aloof, the Constitutionalists, with Barnave at their head, did their best to prop up the monarchy, and Robespierre and Danton on the other hand loudly demanded the *déchéance* (abdication). At the Jacobins and the Cordeliers Robespierre and Danton vented their anger at the success of the moderate party. The populace were of course in harmony with the leaders, Robespierre and Marat, the press became more and more violent, the Jacobins stirred up the affiliated societies, and petition after petition was drawn up to solicit the deposition of the king.

On the 14th July, the apotheosis of Voltaire took place. The ceremony has been described as absurd and profane by many writers. Sergent on the other hand says—

[1] "The removal of the remains of Voltaire was conducted with propriety. There were no women of bad character engaged by the committee. The six white horses were sent by the queen. There was nothing ridiculous except in the imaginations of Royalist historians. Nor was there any enthusiastic joy on the part of the populace, who knew nothing about Voltaire and his philosophy. What enthusiasm could there be in the *heads* (*minds* would be an inappropriate term) of the porters, coalheavers, water-carriers, chiffoniers, &c., who made up the mob? They enjoyed the procession as they would any other —that of the *Fête Dieu*, for instance, which might be made equally ridiculous in description."

[1] Notes on Anquetil.

The remains of Voltaire were laid in the Pantheon between those of Mirabeau and Descartes. In the next revulsion of public opinion they were all scattered to the winds.

On the following day the question of the *déchéance* was finally decided. Barnave turned the scale in the king's favour by an eloquent speech, against which Robespierre rose and protested in the name of humanity. When the decree became known the populace closed the theatres, exclaiming that their cause was betrayed. At night in the Jacobins, Robespierre had it all his own way, and it was decided that a petition should be drawn up and laid upon the patriotic altar in the Champ de Mars, where every citizen might sign it, and swear never to acknowledge Louis XVI. as king. In such an electrical state of the atmosphere a collision was inevitable, and the famous *Massacre du Champ de Mars* (as it was called in Republican language) took place on July 17th.

[1] "After the return of Louis XVI. from Varennes the question was agitated in Paris as to whether, in consequence of the decrees which he had sanctioned, he had not forfeited the throne. The Assembly did not dare to entertain this important question, but it was discussed in the Jacobins. The Cordeliers, more venturesome, resolved to try if the moment were not come to establish the Republic by declaring the deposition of Louis XVI. Already some of the patriots in the National Assembly had been gained over by the Court; the people had long watched, and with increasing distrust, subtle disquisitions taking

[1] From Sergent's notes on Brissot's Memoirs and Anquetil's History. He also contributed an account of these scenes to the *Revue Rétrospective* in 1834.

the place of the frank energy which had at first distinguished the Assembly. Suspicion chiefly rested on the minority of the noblesse, with the exception of Beauharnais, who at this time showed both decision and sincerity. The people, divided between the Jacobins and Cordeliers, wished to present a petition to the National Assembly. The republican party in the Cordeliers tried to combine with the Jacobins, in order to make use of the immense popularity of this club, which gave the impetus to the whole nation; but the Cordeliers failed in the attempt. The Jacobins decided upon a petition to be signed by the people at the Champ de Mars on Sunday 17th. Brissot, Danton, Lanthenas, Laclos, and I were chosen to draw up this petition. Laclos and Brissot wished to indicate the House of Orleans as constitutional heirs of the crown. Danton cried, 'Either the son of Louis, who alone has any right, or, what I should prefer, the Republic.' Lanthenas, always just and moderate, said that the Constitution required the son of Louis; and I, as a consistent republican, voted for the abolition of the monarchy. After some deliberation the petition was drawn up by Brissot. It stated that the people demanded the deposition of Louis, and that the Assembly in its wisdom should consider as to the possibility of filling his place by *constitutional means!* This compromise was chosen because it left the means to be employed in uncertainty. I read the draft to the club, who ordered it to be printed and sent to all the affiliated societies. A literary man

called Bonneville, a printer, and a sort of freemason, a fanatic, who thought himself one of the *illuminati*, was desired to print it, and I was ordered to see that it was sent to the sections.

"On the next day I was greatly surprised to see that the words, 'filling his place by constitutional means,' were left out. I restored them in correcting the proof, which was printed without my seeing it again. It was distributed according to my orders. On the next day I was sent for by the committee to answer for the omission of the sentence, which had not been restored. I vindicated myself by obliging Bonneville to produce the proof, and he got out of the difficulty as well as he could.

"Some time previously the sections had obtained from the Municipality the permission (which was strictly legal) to draw up and sign, peaceably and unarmed, and in any place they chose, a petition, and the Champ de Mars was chosen for the purpose. The Jacobins, when they were told of this, thought that the petition was to be their own.

"The Cordeliers, together with many other republicans, substituted another petition, in which the suppression of the monarchy was demanded. They presented themselves on the 16th at the Assembly; Charles Lameth, the president, would not admit them. They applied to Pétion, Robespierre, and others, who were not able to gain admission for them. The reason given by Charles Lameth was, that the Assembly was engaged on an important

question, and could not attend to them, but that he would put down their names for admission on the following day. Thus the Jacobin club had no part in this affair. Here begins the horrible plot devised by the Court.

"At the evening sitting on Saturday 16th, the deputy Régnaud de St. Jean d'Angély (afterwards the confidant of Buonaparte) said that he had been told that some factious persons intended to excite disturbances on the next day, and he demanded an authorization from the Municipality to proclaim martial law should there be any breach of the peace. His proposal was seconded, and in spite of the opposition of the minority the decree was passed.

"Every day, an hour after the close of the Assembly, a little newspaper was published for two sous, called the *Postillon de Calais;* a supplement had lately been added to this paper, which the public called the *Postilion's Tail;* this sheet was unsigned, detached, and distributed gratis.

"I knew the author, for the *Postillon* was the property of a lady whose maiden name was Calais; she was a great friend of my wife Emira; we were intimate with the whole family. She had established a press in collaboration with three young men who once were clerks, and opposed to the Revolution (one perished on the scaffold at Nantes in 1791, on account of his connection with the rebels of La Vendée). Régnaud chose this paper to spread his opinions (or those for which he was paid); he was the unknown

author of the supplement; he paid for its being printed, and gained nothing by the sale, as it was gratis. There were newsvendors who came to the printing-office, and were given packets of this supplement for distribution. I knew from Madame Calais that they were paid for by the Court through M. Laporte, the Intendant of the Civil List. It is presumed that the Intendant had orders to prove his gratitude to the deputy who was never known to use his pen even under the Empire unless to obtain some practical advantage. We had often warned Madame Calais that she ran a chance of losing her printing-press by these associates. She told everything to us, and in this way I learned that an extra number of copies of Saturday's supplement had been printed; that she had been ordered to tell the newsvendors to distribute a considerable number of them gratis to the different stations of the National Guard; and that copies had been sent to all the departments under the seal of the Maire Bailly. It is evident that the plan was imagined and executed the day before the event of the 17th. The supplement said that some citizens had presented themselves at the bar of the Assembly in the morning, and had read an address demanding the deposition of the king, declaring that such was the will of the people, which had desired its delegates to decree that Louis had ceased to reign; that the president had answered this insolent address with suitable dignity, rebuking the petitioners, and ending with '*Retirez-vous.*' The

writer went on to describe the indignation of the Assembly against this turbulent mob, which called itself 'the people.'

"As the petitioners were not heard or received on the Saturday, all this must be false, the invention of the deputy Régnaud who wrote the supplement, and who at the evening sitting of the Assembly called for the proclamation of martial law.

"I said above that Charles Lameth put off the petitioners to the following day. Two days after the events of the 17th I wrote to him to ask if he had made the reply quoted in the supplement which I enclosed in my letter. He answered that he could not remember whether he had admitted the petitioners, but he assured me that if their address contained the insulting passages quoted in the supplement, he would not disown the reply attributed to him.

"At eight on the morning of the 17th, two Invalides were found hidden under the altar in the Champ de Mars. They were suspected of a design to blow up the altar while the petition was being signed. The men who discovered them cut off their heads, stuck them on pikes, and carried them exactly in front of the house of the Commissary of Police. Here they stopped. A picket of mounted gendarmes, on their way to keep order in the Champ de Mars, saw the heads, talked to the crowd, did not interfere with them, and these assassins were permitted unmolested to carry the bloody heads towards the Assembly, but they disappeared on the way.

"At nine o'clock I went to see Danton, where I found Camille Desmoulins, Fréron, Brune, the bookseller Duplain, Momoro, and others. We talked of the murder of the two Invalides, and of Régnaud de St. Jean d'Angély having demanded martial law; a step which we regarded with suspicion. Suddenly Legendre burst in, much agitated, to tell Danton and his friends that Lefévre, another friend of the Lameths, had come to him and said, 'We are desired to tell you to keep out of Paris to-day; go and dine in the country; take with you Danton, Camille, and Fréron —they must not be seen in Paris to-day. This advice comes from Lameth.'[1] They took the advice, and wanted me to go with them, but I remained to keep order in the section over which I presided. They did not return till the next day, but their absence did not prevent an order for their arrest being issued, and they were obliged to hide in the country for several days.

"Rumours of the doings in the Champ de Mars having reached the Assembly, Régnaud de St. Jean d'Angély renewed his demand for martial law. The president sent for the Maire, and ordered him to restore tranquillity, and if necessary to proclaim martial law and employ force.

"At ten o'clock M. Delmotte, an aide-de-camp of M. Lafayette, rode to the Champ de Mars to see what was going on. He found there about forty people

[1] St. Just reproached the Dantonists with this when he and Robespierre sent them to the scaffold in 1794.

walking about, and talking of the murders. All was perfectly quiet, as the officer said in his report, there being no connection between the event of the morning and the petition. The weather being splendid, numbers of men, women, and children poured into the Champ, some interested in the petition, others from curiosity, the greater number to enjoy themselves.

"At two o'clock in the afternoon, however, some aides-de-camp and officers of the National Guard galloped about the streets, crying that M. de Lafayette had been shot at by a rascal in the Champ de Mars. This exasperated the guards, especially the grenadiers, who idolized their general. 'We must go and avenge our general; death to the Jacobins!' was the war cry.

"A deputation sent by the Cordeliers to the Champ de Mars at three o'clock brought back word that there were not many people, and those were only amusing themselves; the petition was then sent to be signed, and commissioners stationed at every entrance to see that no armed person entered; even those who carried canes were forbidden to come in.

"Meanwhile Bailly summoned the council of the commune at the Hôtel de Ville, and communicated to them the decree of the Assembly. Some battalions of the National Guard collected in the Place de Grêve; but the commune, considering that the murders committed in the morning had nothing to do with the petition, thought it right to ascertain the state of affairs at the Champ de Mars. Three members of

the council were therefore deputed, Messrs. Leroux and Régnault doctors, and Hardi a lawyer (all three friends of mine), to report on what was passing there, and it was decided to await their return before taking any further measures.

"When they reached the Champ de Mars, dressed in their scarves of office, they read the petition, were told of the measures taken by the deputies from the Cordeliers for ensuring respect for law, and they ascertained that the most absolute peace reigned among this concourse of persons of all ages and both sexes. They approved so highly of the petition that they said if they had not been officially sent by the commune they would have signed it themselves.

"The same peace did not reign in the Place de Grêve. The National Guards were demanding to be led to the Champ de Mars to confront the '*Brigands*' who tried to kill their general. M. Bailly, yielding to their cries, and the order he had received from the Assembly, resolved to proclaim martial law, and was starting with his red flag unfurled without waiting for the return of his commissioners. These arrived at the moment when the Maire and the municipal officers were setting off at the head of the troops; they insisted upon the Maire's returning with them to the council-chamber, where they made their declaration, 'that there was no occasion to proclaim martial law.' The unfortunate Bailly had the imprudence to exclaim, 'The wine is drawn, it must be drunk.' (These words, so unworthy of a magistrate and a

philosopher, were remembered against him, and later on sent him to the scaffold.) Two of the commissioners, Hardi and Régnault, wrote in the register of the council their protest against the proclamation of martial law, and they all three retired.

The Maire, the municipal body, and the troops started. They were preceded by a crowd of the lowest class, which increased as they went on ; among them were very likely some who were paid, and probably others who were angry with the Municipality for intending to proclaim martial law. Scarcely had they reached the Champ de Mars than this rabble climbed up to the top of the amphitheatre, assaulted the troops with a shower of stones, and ran away down the steps. The grenadiers, already excited, became furious, and without waiting for orders from the Maire or Lafayette,[1] or giving them time to read the proclamation, fell, sword and bayonet in hand, on the unarmed multitude without distinction of age or sex, dealing death on those who were flying in all directions. Disorder and confusion augmented the number of the victims. The massacre took place, and the Maire never gave a true report of the deaths.

"At eight p.m. all was over (I had been on the point of going to the Champ de Mars with Emira when I heard of the affair). In the Rue St. Dominique I saw some battalions of grenadiers, who complained that

[1] It is worth noting that Sergent does not accuse Bailly or Lafayette of being the aggressors.

they had not been led to punish the 'brigands'—the assassins of their general.

"The faction of anti-revolutionists, not satisfied with the massacre, obtained a decree to arrest the ringleaders, and I saw six citizens brought in irons before the tribunal. All honour to Counsellor Mutel, who on my representations struck off the irons from the prisoners, most of whom were electors. There was no charge against them, for as petitioners the law was on their side, and they were declared not guilty. Why were not the assassins of the Invalides in the morning brought forward? I answer, 'Because they were protected.'

"In two sittings of the Club of the Electors, I was called upon to give an account of these events, and I produced all the confirmatory reports. No one contradicted me, although it would have been in the interest of the club of the Ste. Chapelle to do so, if my veracity had not been so well established."[1]

This was the first time that the Constituent Assembly acted against the revolutionary party. It was to pay for its victory by political death. The revolutionary party did not recover for some days from its terror and surprise. Its chiefs remained in the country in compliance with the friendly warnings mentioned by Sergent. But no measures were taken

[1] Sergent's style is often so prolix and rambling that it is not easy to make his notes intelligible; he also presupposes a familiarity with the facts. In this account he tries to throw the responsibility for the 'Massacre' on the Court, who, he says, prepared it beforehand, and on the rashness of Bailly in proclaiming martial law, but it seems really to have been caused by the unpremeditated assault of the rabble.

against them; the clubs were not closed, nor the freedom of the press restrained, and they soon returned more powerful than ever.

The Assembly was occupied with the revision of the Constitution. The Act was presented to the king on the 3rd of September, and accepted by him on the 13th. At the same time an end was put to the captivity of the Royal family, and the guard which had been set to watch the king was turned into his body-guard. Louis XVI. asked for a general amnesty, which was granted, and on the 14th he declared his solemn acceptation of the Constitution in the Assembly. The President Thouret[1] had taken care to obliterate as much as possible all trace of the *ancien régime.* The king's chair was of the same height as the president's, and whenever the king sat down Thouret did so likewise. A joyful crowd attended the return of the king to the Tuileries. He was surrounded by Lafayette and his brilliant staff, and followed by all the members of the Assembly. Bands played, salvos of artillery rent the air, and the enthusiasm of the people knew no bounds, as on the *Fête* of the Federation a year before. For a moment the popularity of the royal family seemed restored. Even the queen was called repeatedly to the windows of the Tuileries to receive the acclamations of the people—"*Ce n'est plus le même peuple,*" said Marie Antoinette. The rejoicings continued for several days, during which the royal family visited the opera, and drove on the Boulevards, everywhere received by an admiring crowd. On the 18th the Constitution was publicly proclaimed with all the pomp of a religious ceremony. A solemn *Te Deum*, as if for a victory, was sung at Notre Dame, and on another day the king gave a grand *fête* to the people, and distributed alms among the poor. By the 30th, however, when the king went to close

[1] Thouret perished on the scaffold on April 22, 1794.

the Assembly in person, all this enthusiasm had subsided, or rather had changed its object; the king was received with coldness by the crowd, who insulted the members of the Right, and even Barnave; while Robespierre and Pétion were crowned with laurel, and carried home in triumph by the mob.

CHAPTER VII.

1791—1792.

Opening of the Legislative Assembly — Brissot—Pétion—Robespierre—Sergent a Police Administrator—State of the Police —The Press — Louvet — Loustalot — Camille Desmoulins—Hébert — Parisot — Spies — Tallien—Foreign Powers—Emigrants—Girondin Ministry—Swiss Châteauvieux—War—Madame Roland—The 20th June.

THE Legislative Assembly met for the first time on October 1st, 1791. By a suicidal decree none of the members of the Constituent were allowed to sit in it, so all the benefit of experience was lost.

In a popular parliament there is no power equal to that of speech, and the orators from the Gironde by their fervid eloquence gave their name to what became the leading party—the Moderate Left, or, as we should say, the Liberal, as distinguished from the extreme Left, or Radical party—the Montagne as it was called.

Sergent's fellow-townsman Brissot, whom we remember as one of the joyous band of young fellows who sought in vain to attract Emira's attention in the narrow street of Chartres, was one of the chief leaders of the Gironde, and his newspaper became their organ. Sergent has a good deal to say about him.

[1] "Brissot de Warville (the son of a pastry-cook of Ouarville, a village in the neighbourhood of Chartres) developed at a very early age a taste for literature,

[1] From Sergent's notes on Brissot's memoirs.

especially in connection with law. His turn of mind was bitterly sarcastic. At the age of twenty he despatched from Paris, where he was studying law, a scandalous libel, containing infamous accusations against several people in Chartres, some known and others unknown to him. He did not spare Emira. The first time that he reappeared at Chartres he was ordered to quit the town, and he returned to Paris; then visited England, and published a work on Criminal Jurisprudence which did him great credit. His youthful misdemeanour was forgotten, and he was received at Chartres with respect, but without affection. He naturally did not stay there long; he returned to England, where he attained some reputation. He, however, made an enemy of a refugee called Morande, the author of the *Gazettier Cuirassé*, a journal which was feared by all the *mauvais sujets* turned out of their own country. The editor himself was not much more respectable than they were.

"Brissot married in England. He was active and energetic, and tried to set up a sort of college which, however, failed in consequence of intrigues, and he restored the sums subscribed. He liked an atmosphere of intrigue; he wrote against his adversaries, who tore him to pieces in return. The Anglo-American war served his purpose admirably. He threw himself into the war-party, at the same time he wrote in favour of the negroes, whom he stirred up to rebellion, and he joined a celebrated philanthropic

association in London, to which the highly esteemed Lord Stanhope belonged.

"From this time Brissot gave himself up entirely to politics. He studied the interests and mutual relations of the Courts of Europe; he wrote his opinion of the persecutions which prepared the way for the American War; his fame extended to France, and was honourable to his country. He entered into correspondence with Franklin; associated with Thomas Paine; but he said, wrote, and did so much, that in spite of the liberality of the English Government he received orders to quit the country.

"He came back to Paris, where he wrote again upon the Anglo-American War, but his combative and somewhat confused turn of mind carried him too far. The moment had not yet arrived when everything might be said. He took it into his head to point out the errors of the government and the abuses of our administration, to treat the ministers as if they were a set of dupes, the automata of certain clever rogues who were the agents of foreign governments and pulled the strings.

"He quarrelled with Linguet and other political writers; his tone toward them was hard and arrogant, for his ideas went farther than theirs. Again he gave offence to the French Government; the ministers were annoyed, they attacked him, and he tried to obtain protection from the Court. The queen was not apparently inclined to cover him with her mantle; he was sent to the Bastille on the

pretext that he was the author of a (so-called) libel against her, entitled *Life of Antoinette.* His wife had some connection with the chancellor of the Duke of Orleans; through him she managed to interest the prince (who had reason to complain of Antoinette) in favour of her husband. Sheltered by the duke, who said there was no evidence against him, Brissot was permitted to disavow the libel, and was let out of prison. (What was I to think of Brissot later on, when I saw him abandon the prince to his enemies, and even take part with them ?)

"The Revolution broke out. Brissot edited a journal which at first was persecuted; he persisted, and was supported by Mirabeau, Sièyes, D'Orléans, and other deputies; he gained the friendship of Lafayette, who remembered his disquisitions in London on the American War. After the fall of the Bastille he became a member of the municipal council. He developed political and legal ability, and several deputies chose him to draw up reports. He founded the Society of Friends of the Blacks, which was composed of some of the first men of the kingdom.

"Sometimes favoured and sometimes rejected by different ministers, he yet always achieved his object —that of penetrating their secrets and bringing to light their schemes; he was thus formidable to all parties, and he embraced with zeal the popular cause.

"He drew up a municipal plan for Paris, but he was angry because the inhabitants wished to examine and discuss it. He was proud, and despised all who

disagreed with his opinions; no reputation inspired him with respect; he thought himself the superior of all.

"My reason for dwelling so much upon this man is that he was no ordinary man, and I wish to describe him as he appeared to me. In the early days of the Revolution I often met Brissot at the house of M. Bélier, a relation of my Emira. She and I forgave the diatribes he had launched against us in former days; we never alluded to them, but met as old play-fellows.

"In Paris Brissot frequented none but people of consideration; he lived very frugally on his small patrimony, and on the fruits of his assiduous labour. He had no social vices, unless his caustic humour be called one. He was an excellent husband and father.

"When he offered himself as a candidate for the Legislative Assembly he made great promises to all who could help him. The Court and the ministers were afraid of him, and sent for Morande, who published against him a pamphlet, in which he was described as a bankrupt and a cheat. It said that when he was in England he received large sums for a literary establishment, and ran away with the money. Brissot replied in a printed memorandum, which entirely justified his conduct, and convinced all honest people.

"Montmorin [1] issued against the patriots a placard

[1] Minister of War, massacred on September 2.

called the *Chant du Coq*, in which he attacked Brissot furiously. The term Brissotter as a synonym for thieving was the offspring of these calumnies. Thus, in anti-revolutionary language, when a thief was caught and condemned, it was said 'a Brissotin is going to be hanged.' This is an instance of the violence of that party against the friends of liberty.

"He was, however, proposed as a candidate for the Legislative Assembly, which caused a yell of indignation from the club of the Sainte Chapelle. A member of the name of Roucher, author of the poem *Des Mois*, a man of talent, who sold his pen for bread, and even obliged the Court to bargain for it, was the first to attack Brissot in the club of which he was the leader. Afterwards he brought a troop of followers, as a huntsman brings his pack, to the Club de l'Evêché,[1] and denounced Brissot with Brissot's partisans and defenders; he slandered them all round, and abused everybody; he ought to have been turned out, but his ring of supporters applauded him vociferously in his most intemperate attacks, and hissed every attempt at interruption. At length a man got up in the club of the Evêché, who had been left there as a spy by the club of the Sainte Chapelle, a lawyer called Boquillon, a *juge de paix*. He was a handsome man, with a magnificent voice, eloquent, persuasive, as cunning as the devil. He rushed to the tribune, began by attacking the agents of the Sainte Chapelle club, pretended to defend Brissot for the crimes

[1] This club was a centre of conspiracy throughout the Revolution.

attributed to him by the Court, praised his talents and acquirements, eulogized his writings; in short, seemed to be his most zealous partisan; when all of a sudden he turned round and said that it was with deep sorrow that he felt himself constrained to own that since the opening of the Legislative Assembly he had regretted bitterly being forced to sit by the side of Brissot, who was the head of the faction which had caused the massacre of the Champ de Mars; that he could not understand how it was that inferior agents were some in prison, some in exile, while Brissot was free, and enjoying the reputation of a patriot, &c. He then described the event of the 17th,[1] in the spirit approved by the faction of Lameth and Lafayette (who were reconciled to each other at this time), and exhibited Brissot as the chief promoter of the sedition."

Another fellow-townsman of Sergent's, for whom he had a most unjustifiable partiality, was Pétion. When the new Assembly was constituted, Bailly was forced to resign his function as Maire, and Lafayette and Pétion became candidates for the office. The Court had the blindness to support Pétion, thus giving up the municipal power into the hands of the Jacobins. The Queen said—"M. de la Fayette wishes to be Maire of Paris in order to become Maire of the Palace; Pétion is a Jacobin, but he is a fool, and incapable of being the leader of a party." Pétion in his new office seems to have exhibited a special talent for keeping out of the way, for he was nowhere to be found, until too late, on

[1] The massacre in the Champ de Mars.

the 20th June; on the 10th August he was in bed; on the 2nd September he did nothing to stop the massacres; yet this man, while making no effort to prevent bloodshed, fainted away at the sight of blood. His cordial manner, weak good-nature, and real mediocrity, recommended him to all parties, while he was feared by none.

[1] "Pétion, whom the Royalists considered as an ardent and cruel demagogue, was far from deserving the reputation; to see him was enough to prove the contrary. His deportment was serious and dignified, his countenance frank, and his manners affable; his eloquence was kept within bounds, but it was full of warmth and animation. Pétion never made use of a single expression in the Constituent Assembly which could lead people to think him a friend of anarchy and disorder. As a public man his principles were austere. He hated not monarchy only, but the courtier spirit which despises all that is not in conformity with old traditions.

"It was no doubt this antagonism which caused him, when exercising a temporary police over the royal family, to exhibit a rudeness almost amounting to insolence; he could not resist the opportunity for taking his revenge; it was a weakness. In private life Pétion was an estimable man; incapable of violating the laws of honesty, he never permitted to himself an action or a word which could hurt or annoy any one. In society he was gay, gentle, frank, expansive. In domestic life his simplicity, like that of

[1] From Sergent's notes on Anquetil's History.

Rousseau, was almost childlike. While asserting his opinions in the Assembly he never failed in courtesy. He was a democrat, but he discouraged demagogues; and although some violent writers, who were paid for their pains, have called him *ferocious*, I can refute them openly. I knew him from the time we were at college; he was kind, generous, and virtuous. Although his parents were not on good terms with each other, he was an excellent son to both, a good, faithful husband, a good and a devoted friend, as he proved in his conduct to Brissot and the Girondins with whom he perished.[1]

"In the Assembly Pétion soon attached himself to Robespierre, whose principles, as set forth in his speeches, harmonized with his own. They became so intimate that they were called two fingers on the same hand. This friendship seemed to last to the end of 1792, but in reality for the last seven or eight months it had turned to hatred."

The all-powerful influence of Robespierre in the Jacobin club made up for his exclusion from the Assembly. Sergent says of him—

[2] "He was in no way favoured by nature. He was small, ill made, every part of his body was badly formed. His hands, eyes, throat, and shoulders were subject to convulsive movements frightful to behold. His countenance had no expression, his eyes no intelli-

[1] Robespierre condemned him to death with the Girondins in 1794. He escaped and wandered about with Buzot, Roland, Gorsas, &c., and was found dead of cold and hunger, half eaten by wolves.

[2] From Sergent's notes on Anquetil's History.

gence. At times the roughness of his manner degenerated into downright brutality. When he tried to walk rapidly he jerked from side to side. His voice partook of the discord which pervaded his whole person. Its intonation and inflexions were in a sharp treble, with a strong provincial accent very damaging to the effect of his speeches, already wanting in elegance and animation. It was at Robespierre's suggestion that the populace was armed with pikes, which had already, he said, played such an interesting part in the Revolution. One of the professors at the college where Robespierre was brought up said to a friend of his father's, 'His success at college has led you astray; he will never do more than he has done, or know more than he does know. He has not a good head; he has little common sense, and no foresight.'"

While Robespierre ruled the Jacobins, Danton domineered over the Cordeliers, and Santerre governed the Faubourg St. Antoine.

Sergent had already rendered considerable services to the revolutionary party, he had been President, Juge de Paix, and Commissaire de Police of the district Mauconseil; he established the first Bureau de Bienfaisance; afterwards he was President of the district Jean Jacques, and while there obtained pardon for the soldiers of the Royal Champagne. He was now, in spite of Robespierre's opposition, elected to the Municipality.

"Hitherto[1] I had been acting only as a private individual, following the inspirations of a feeling

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

heart with self-imposed duties. I was now about to have others conferred upon me. In 1791 I was appointed a member of the Municipality. I was one of the four police administrators; for the first time I received a salary fixed at 4000 francs, and I gave up an art by which I earned four times as much. Before I mention all the good I was able to effect personally in this post, I may be permitted to declare that no one can accuse me of not treating a prisoner with courtesy, with not having listened to him with interest, and (when my duty rendered it imperative) of not having pronounced sentence against him with the dignity and forbearance which ought to characterize a magistrate.

"There were four administrators.

"1. M. Perron, who exercised alone, with the assistance of a secretary whom we sent to him, a *secret police*, unknown to his colleagues. When he and his papers were seized, he owned that he was under the orders of Lafayette and the Court.

"2. M. Viguier, much attached to his duties, but especially to foreign affairs; he arrived very late at the committee. (These two were the old members.)

"3. M. Panis, on account of his feeble health and the distance at which he lived, arrived late, and shut himself up for a long time examining the affairs of the department; he endorsed with confidence all that I had done in his absence, and cared only to see the important affairs which I had not chosen to decide without him.

"I fortunately was endowed at that time with such excellent health that although the Maire often called me up in the night, I was able to be at the office every day from seven a.m. till ten p.m. Panis and I established a new rule which obliged the four administrators to meet in committee every day. From nine to eleven the six heads of the departments brought in their reports, and left the papers which had to be signed in the office. From eleven to one the administrators deliberated alone on everything connected with the police. The public was then admitted until four o'clock. A secretary inscribed in a register *ad hoc* an accurate report of each sitting, and of the resolutions passed. The evening was devoted to separate work. Each administrator in turn devoted a week to inspect the prisons and attend the municipal council. Every department of the police was likewise divided into four sections, each of which was under the special charge of an administrator, who gave in his report to the committee. This was the state of the police before the 10th August, 1792.

"Soon after my appointment, the National Guard and all that belonged to it—food, magazines, and arsenals—were put under my charge; my colleagues entrusted every detail in its administration to me. The heads of the Bureau, seeing that M. Perron attended every day regularly from nine o'clock, accustomed themselves to report all their affairs to us, and to consult no one else. M. Perron, I know

not why, would not give his opinion till after I had given mine, and then he signed on trust. I consequently had sent to me almost all persons who had business with the police, because owing to my excellent memory and my talent for administration, the heads of the departments knew that I should be always equal to the demands upon me. I will not relate the means which were employed during more than a year to excite disturbances which might compromise Pétion, the Maire, and the new municipal officers. Everything was tried in the hope either of destroying us or of making us fail in our duties."

The power of the clubs at this time was equalled by that of the press. During the Revolution one hundred and thirty newspapers sprang into being. The Court, the Assembly, and all the most influential men of every shade of opinion had their organ. The *Moniteur* was edited with great ability by Brissot, Condorcet, and Clavière, and continued afterwards by the famous Benjamin Constant; Barrère conducted the *Point de Jour*, a royalist paper, of which there were few, most of them died early; Mercier and Carra the *Annales Patriotiques*. Louvet (the author, as Sergent says, of *Faublas*, "a pretty novel," or, as Carlyle calls it, "a vile cloaca of a book," so greatly is the taste of the world changed) edited the *Sentinelle* in conjunction with Tallien and other patriots.

[1] "Its frank, simple, and moderate title announced that the authors were penetrated with the truth, and anxious to lead the nation by the voice of reason and justice. It was printed at the expense of several patriots, and pasted on the walls of Paris."

[1] From Sergent's notes on the *Histoire d'un Demi Siècle.*

Loustalot, the young man who stirred up the people in the Palais Royal in 1789, and died of grief after the affair of Nancy, edited the *Révolutions de Paris.*

[1] "He was full of wit and energy. The motto chosen by him was, 'The great only appear great because we are upon our knees—let us rise.' After his death the paper was continued by the publisher, Prudhomme. The cleverest, wittiest of all the journals was the *Révolutions de Paris et de Brabant*, by Camille Desmoulins, who, later on, edited the *Vieux Cordelier.* It is true that he affected the title of *Procureur de la Lanterne* (Attorney-General of the Rope), but neither his actions nor his writings were wild. He was enthusiastic and witty; he admired the eloquence of Vergniaud, the gentle energy of Ducos, sometimes he applauded Guadet, but he distrusted Gensonné. He liked Pétion, but he opposed Buzot, whose honesty, however, he esteemed. How could he be suspected of being one of the influential heads of the Gironde?—he who defended Marat, the friend of Danton, and the *bête noire* of the Rolandists and Girondins? He was sweetness itself; very frank; by no means an orator; he could not speak.

"Hébert was an adventurer employed at the *Théâtre de la République;* he had been presented to the Jacobin club and rejected. For the sake of gain he chose to write a newspaper so abominably disgusting (the *Père Duchesne*) that when he

[1] From Sergent's notes on the *Histoire d'un Demi Siècle.*

was proposed to the Convention as Minister of the Interior, I rushed into the Tribune and said, 'Do you wish to dishonour France in the face of the world by reducing her to choose as minister a man whose whole talent consists in insulting our morals and our language in a miserable journal?' I caused the proposal to fall through. His share in the 10th August carried him, with others of no merit whatsoever, to the Municipality.

"Another adventurer was L'Huillier. He belonged to my section Mauconseil; he was puzzle-headed, low in his habits, and was often rejected when he sought for places, although he had been an elector in 1789. He appeared in the sectional assemblies on the 10th August, and succeeded by means of courting the mob. He perished, like Hébert, on the scaffold. These men had no apparent means of existence, which rendered their exaggerated republicanism suspicious.

"Parisot was an editor on the other side, a literary man full of wit, who amused his readers by epigrams full of salt and raillery in excellent taste respecting the Revolution and its leaders. I was obliged to send for him to the police office to answer for a placard which was circulated in great profusion in Paris. It bore the name neither of the author nor the printer; this was already against the law, and it threatened to produce fatal consequences. He came at my bidding, he argued with firmness and ability, he invoked just principles, &c. I replied calmly but firmly, and he was obliged to ask for a few days' delay

to satisfy my demands. He was convinced that I had a right to arrest him; my moderation astonished him. My colleague, M. Perron, alone was present. Parisot was still more surprised when I followed him out of our study, and laughingly said to him, 'You are no longer in presence of your judge; you are at liberty to travesty our conversation to-morrow in your paper, make it as amusing as you often represent my speeches; obey this order from the police administrator, and I will engage that he will be the first to laugh at your sallies.' Parisot knew that he was guilty; he concealed himself, and did not reappear until the 10th August, when he was arrested. His placard, as I felt convinced, was paid by the Court out of the Civil List.'

"The Court had several spies in the Cordeliers district; the principal and most active of them was Damiens, one of the ushers of the Court of the Châtelet. He attended frequently the meetings of the Staff of the National Guard. Damiens' especial duty was to arrest so-called seditious persons and incendiary writers, with a warrant from the king's Attorney-General. These writers in truth revealed to the public the actions of the agents, and often interfered with their schemes.

"A small bookseller and printer, who lived in the district, who possessed only one press, and from motives of economy was himself compositor and corrector, and sometimes writer or reviser of articles, was the first to proclaim and sustain the rights and

freedom of the press at the price of imprisonment, whence the power of truth and that of the club, now beginning to be felt, quickly delivered him. This man's name was Momoro.[1]

"The Jacobins had a still more powerful protector in the very heart of the enemy. This was Damiens' wife, an excellent woman with simple manners, and a good and frugal housewife. She probably read the sheets arbitrarily seized by her husband's paid agent (I myself often caused some of them to be restored by threatening to refer to the tribunals). The commentaries on the rights of man influenced her imagination, and she could not be persuaded, in spite of her husband's endeavours, to regard young men, whose only weapon was a fragile pen, in the light of dangerous assassins. Conscientiously resolved to spare them the inconveniences to which their courage and their patriotism exposed them, she gave them timely warning when she discovered that her husband had warrants against them in his pocket-book; it was indeed a betrayal of his secrets, but by this means she avoided the grief of seeing her idol, the excellent Danton, sent to prison; or the amiable Camille Desmoulins, amiable though he had already assumed the title of *Procureur de la Lanterne;* or Loustalot, who died a martyr in 1790; or Momoro, whose name and address, 'Rue de la Harpe, at the

[1] He perished in 1794 with Hébert and other writers of the same stamp. His wife performed the part of the Goddess of Reason in 1793.

sign of Liberty,' were on every sheet. In spite of her interference with his actions her husband never beat her; her spotless character forced him to respect her, and the gratitude of those whom she thus protected was perfectly pure."

Many of the journals on both sides were broadsheets printed in bright colours, and pasted over the walls, so that he who ran might read.

Marat issued journals of both kinds; his *Ami du Peuple* came out every morning, inciting to every species of anarchy, while the *Père Duchesne* of Hébert reached the *ne plus ultra* of obscenity and of profanity.

"Tallien was introduced by me into the Municipality. His demeanour was modest at that time. He was just beginning to write. He was the son of a porter. The principles of the Revolution, as propounded by the distinguished men of 1789, struck his youthful fancy. He joined several clubs of young men, and made himself remarkable by his energetic speeches. He was charged with drawing up the addresses of the club, next of those of the sections, which obtained some success in the National Assembly and the Jacobins, where Mirabeau applauded the patriotic fire of the young neophyte. He wrote for the *Sentinelle*. He made friends who supported it, some by praise, others more substantially. Some true patriots gave him the means of exercising his pen. I proposed to Manuel, the Procureur de la Commune, to make Tallien his private secretary, in order to afford him the means of subsistence. He never came to my house. I never broke bread with

him. Latterly he had a fashionable wife,[1] and a salon. I was never invited to his parties, or thought of presenting myself at them."

While the supreme power was drifting into the hands of the Jacobins, the king chose his first ministry from the Feuillants.

Three decrees were passed in the Assembly; the first, to summon the king's brothers to return; the second, to threaten the emigrants with confiscation and death; the third, to forbid the non-juring clergy to celebrate mass, and unless they gave way, to deprive them of their means of living and expel them from the country. Louis XVI. consented to ratify the first, but on the two latter he imposed his veto. The emigrants were becoming a formidable power, and the threatening aspect of foreign affairs was beginning to absorb the attention of all parties. Already in the meeting at Pilnitz (August 1791), the Emperor and the King of Prussia had issued a proclamation appealing to all the sovereigns of Europe to intervene in favour of the King of France. Troops were therefore assembled on all the frontiers. Still the Emperor Leopold was desirous of peace, although he could not withhold his sympathy from his sister and brother monarch or his support from the Comte de Provence (afterwards Louis XVIII.), who was holding his Court surrounded by the French emigrants at Coblentz. The ministers[2] knew that

[1] It was Tallien's position in the Municipality that enabled him to defer the execution of Madame de Fontenay (who afterwards became his wife) until the 9th Thermidor. She was imprisoned with Madame Beauharnais. They were apprised of the death of Robespierre by a woman who had posted herself in front of their prison, and as soon as she saw Madame de Fontenay, took up a bit of her gown and a stone, and made a gesture of decapitation.

[2] The ministers were Montmorin, Bertrand de Molleville, Delessart, Du Portail. Du Portail was succeeded as Minister of War by Narbonne. The latter was more liberal and more warlike

the French army, in which the spirit of mutiny was rife (the soldiers siding with the mob against their officers), was ill-prepared for victory, and hoped to avert war by negotiations. Extremes meet, for besides the king and his ministers the only other voice in favour of peace was that of Robespierre, moved, Sergent says, "by his jealousy of Brissot and the Girondins, who, with the other parties, for various reasons loudly called for war."

Leopold's sudden death (March 1st, 1792) brought matters to a crisis. Kaunitz, in the name of his sovereign, Francis II., the successor and son of Leopold, addressed an ultimatum to France, demanding that the French monarchy should be re-established in conformity with the royal declaration of June 23rd, 1789; that the fiefs of Alsace and Lorraine should be immediately restored to the German princes who had possessions in them (the *princes possessionnés* they were called), and that the Church of France should be replaced in the enjoyment of all its property. These demands produced the most violent excitement in Paris, the ministers were accused of collusion with the enemy, and resigned their posts. The king had to choose their successors from the popular party.

[1] "The Privy Council persuaded the king to choose Jacobin ministers. I was mentioned for the Ministry of the Interior. They did not wish to compromise the king by a direct refusal on my part; two men who were in the king's secrets were despatched to me. The editor of the newspaper called *La Verité*,

than his colleagues, but he fell with them. He escaped into England, and after September 2nd, 1792, was one of the delightful circle of emigrants so amusingly described by Miss Burney, who gathered round Madame de Stael in her exile near Mickleham.

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

who was paid out of the Civil List, was desired to announce that I was proposed for this appointment. I had already proclaimed myself a republican. By accepting this post of king's minister, I must either have given the lie to my opinions, or betrayed the confidence of the king; I remained faithful to my opinions, and Roland, Clavières and Servan were chosen."

Sergent forgets to add Dumouriez, by far the ablest of the set. This was called the *Sans-culottes* ministry, though Sergent repudiates the nickname.

[1] "In 1790 some journalists said epigrammatically of the corruption introduced by the Court into the Assembly, that the queen gave *culottes de velours* to her party. One day several deputies were assembled round a large fire before the opening of the sitting, and one of the most influential members of the *Coté Droit*, Dandré, said laughingly to the Montagnards, 'What do you expect to gain by being *sans-culottes?*' Pétion replied, 'We will continue to be *sans-culottes* in order that we may not be *sans-honneur*.' Much applause followed the repartee, and the name continued to be given to those who were known to be incorruptible. I was present at this conversation. Only three or four out of seven hundred Jacobins adopted this strange and disgusting attire; none of the leaders were ever seen in it."

Sergent does justice to the probity of Roland—

[2] "Roland, honest, conscientious, and endowed with

[1] Memoir written in 1801.
[2] Memoir dictated in 1847.

a great capacity for administration, entered the ministry surrounded by the splendour of popular enthusiasm. Perhaps he valued himself too highly in consequence, for soon it was remarked that he wished to domineer over the Executive Council, and often impeded their deliberations by attaching exaggerated importance to trifles. Discussion irritated his temper, and he then sheltered himself haughtily behind his privileges and authority as minister."

He speaks of Madame Roland as the noble woman "who ascended the scaffold with the dignity of a queen seating herself on the throne," but he did not approve of her extraordinary influence, and was resolved not to fall under it.

[1] "When I was Administrator of Police, Madame Pétion said to me, 'Madame Roland is anxious for a conference with you on the powers entrusted to the police; I think she will ask for a list of the most influential men in the sections, the Jacobins and Cordeliers.' 'Is it M. Roland who wishes for this memorandum?' I asked. 'No; it is Madame.' I gave no reply.

"Some days afterwards, I received an invitation to dinner from the Minister of the Interior. On the day fixed, just as I was starting, Nicholas Bonneville, who paid assiduous court to the Rolands, came to me and said much the same thing. Directly after dinner Bonneville took me into the garden, where we found Madame Roland sitting alone in an arbour. She made the same request, and when I asked her

[1] Note on Madame Roland's memoirs.

how it was that when I was talking with the minister over our coffee, he said nothing whatever on the subject, she replied that it was a matter to be treated between her and me. 'Oh! Madame,' I said, laughing, 'when I am with a pretty woman I forget things of that sort; you are made to charm society, and not to trouble your head about politics.' And I refused to give her these lists in spite of Bonneville's importunity. One may think that her vanity was humiliated, but she dissembled, and I did not find out her annoyance until I saw what she said of me in her *Memoirs*. She also says that I had funds at my disposal. Perhaps she was not aware that the ministers (of whom her husband was one) received by decree of the Assembly a sum for secret services, and gave 10,000 francs a month to Pétion for the police. I received it twice from Servan and Dumouriez. Madame Pétion was the sole depositary of this money; and as many of the heads of the Bureaux de Police did not inspire much confidence, the whole sum was always entrusted to me, and I had to render no account of the way in which I spent it."

The Swiss regiment, Châteauvieux, was the chief of those which mutinied at Nancy and fired on Bouillé's troops, killing their own young commander, Désilles, who heroically posted himself in front of the guns, entreating them to desist. The Swiss government tried and sentenced them. Forty were sent to the galleys at Brest. Sergent, with other Jacobins, memorialized the Assembly in their favour.

[1] "This regiment, animated by republican principles, was the victim chosen to avenge the defection of the others, which was called insubordination. Bouillé marched against them. The inhabitants of Nancy opposed the entrance of Bouillé's troops, and refused the conditions imposed by Bouillé, to deliver up the leaders of the regiment. In 1792, a deputation from Brest asked for the *rehabilitation*, not *pardon*, of these Swiss, who were chained to the galleys, the victims of an odious persecution. A triumphal *fête* was celebrated on March 15th, 1792, when these victims came to thank the Assembly. It was organized by Collot d'Herbois, and paid for by the sections."

It was on this occasion that the red cap of liberty, the *Bonnet Phrygien*, as Sergent calls it—the cap of the galleys, as the Royalists named it—was first adopted as a badge.

Few people approached Louis XVI. without being vanquished by his simple kindness. Roland, however, was preserved by the ascendancy of his wife, who was the soul of the Gironde, from what she considered this weakness. She laughed at the easy good nature with which the king talked to his ministers. Dumouriez, on the other hand, soon fell under his influence, and sincerely desired to save the monarchy, provided that he was allowed to direct its counsels.

On April 20th the king went down to the Assembly, accompanied by Dumouriez, who, as Minister for Foreign Affairs, read a memorial setting forth the insults France had received from Germany, and the preposterous demands of Francis II. Then the king rose and proclaimed war against Austria.

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

The announcement was received with enthusiasm, and ratified by the Assembly, and the French troops were ordered to invade Belgium. But the army, disorganized by a long peace, and demoralized by the Revolution, was not in a condition to obtain success. The soldiers would not obey their officers; they were repulsed and seized with a sudden panic; one column under Biron fled in confusion, while the other murdered Dillon their commander. Lafayette, who was general of the army of the centre, complained of the orders which were issued by Dumouriez in ignorance of the real condition of the troops. There was unfortunately bitter hostility between these two distinguished men, and Dumouriez, on the other hand, was drifting every day further away from his colleagues. The country was becoming more and more discontented; the military reverses were imputed to treachery; the Assembly declared itself *en permanence*, as well as the sections; the king's guard (suspected of being too loyal) was disbanded on May 29, and its commander, the Duc de Brissac, sent to the High Court of Orleans, whither the minister Delessart had preceded him.[1] Again the king was urged to ratify a decree to banish the refractory priests, to give up his confessor and choose one who had taken the oath; and to ratify another decree to form a camp of 20,000 Fédérés from the provinces round Paris. The king again imposed his veto. Roland read an almost insolent letter, which was really written by his wife, to the king in council. Its tone was so threatening that Dumouriez advised Louis XVI. to dismiss all the ministers except himself, and at the same time to ratify the decrees which he promised to neutralize by sending the Fédérés at once to join the army; and with regard to the priests he said, and too truly, that by exile they would escape a

[1] They were both, with all the other prisoners, murdered at Versailles, September 4th, 1792.

more terrible fate. But the king held firm,[1] and after an affecting interview with Louis XVI., in which the king told him that he expected and was prepared for death, Dumouriez left for the army.

For the last time the king chose a ministry from the constitutional party, but they were men unable to cope with the other two parties, who coalesced to effect another *coup d'état.* Sergent accuses Madame Roland of being chief conspirator.

[2] "The affair (of the 20th June, 1792) was invented and arranged in the salon of Madame Roland; the agents, as was known to a few, were Roland and Clavières. (I did not hear Servan mentioned, the king had dismissed him a short time previously.) Among the deputies who were admitted to this mysterious plot were Brissot, Gensonné, and Guadet; others less notorious were charged with exciting the movement. The general infatuation in favour of Roland served the purpose of the deputies, of Clavières, and of Madame Roland, who was more of a minister than her husband. I know that in saying this I am attacking an idol before whom the world bows down, because a cruel fate (which I myself lamented at the time) has deified her. But in my opinion (and I had opportunities of judging) this heroine of the Revolution caused more misfortunes than the notorious Théroigne de Méricourt armed, and followed by a club of women.

[1] The king's refusal was the origin of the nickname, M. et Madame Veto, with which the populace insulted the king and queen on the 20th June. The veto bestowed on the king by the Constitution, was like the guinea given by the Vicar of Wakefield to his daughters on the condition that they should never use it.

[2] Note contributed by Sergent to the *Revue Rétrospective* in 1834.

It was Madame Roland who disseminated the seeds of discord, hatred, and suspicion. I noticed in her salon how ingeniously she excited the deputies from the provinces—who had been ordered by their constituents to visit the virtuous Roland the first thing on their arrival—to despise and misjudge many of the members of the old and new Chambers. Clever, beautiful, and charming, known through the indiscreet whispers of some of the Girondins as the authoress of several of her husband's reports and speeches, she formed for herself a circle of these new-comers who idolized her, and her study became the furnace in which was lighted the first spark of the terrible blaze in which the Girondins and Brissotins perished, most of them victims of an artfully prepared delusion. While Roland was minister by the appointment of Louis XVI., Madame Roland instituted at the Ministry of the Interior a department to influence public opinion, over which she presided. The good honest Lanthenas was only its titular chief. She sent for me through Madame Pétion,[1] an excellent woman, who was satisfied with her home duties, without aspiring to be a *statesman* like her friend. Happily I am not a barbarian; I respect all women—I have so many reasons for venerating my own wife—and I therefore did not answer Madame Roland by bidding her attend to her cooking and knitting, as many would have done in my place. But she must have been annoyed at my laughing compliments, so different from what

[1] See the interview described on page 155.

she expected from the Chief of the Police. I nevertheless dined frequently at her house even after . . . why should I not speak the word?—the events of the 2nd September—and if I had consented to join the Girondins she would not have made me figure in her *Appeal to Posterity.*"

All things seemed at a deadlock. The king had a right to refuse his veto, and he and his ministers grew more unpopular day by day. Alarmed by the rapid progress of the Revolution, Lafayette, on June 18th, wrote a letter imploring the Assembly to put an end to the exaggerated power of the clubs, and to defend the Constitution. This step did nothing but harm. The Right suspected Lafayette of wishing to grasp the supreme power, while the Left resolved to delay no longer the meditated insurrection. Instigated by Santerre, St. Hurugue, and other leaders of the Faubourgs, the sections asked to be allowed to celebrate a national *fête* on June 20th (the anniversary of the oath of the *Jeu du Paume*), armed, and in the dress they wore at the siege of the Bastille; and at the same time to defile through the Assembly, presenting a petition demanding the execution of the articles contained in the Declaration of Rights, and the recall of the Jacobin Ministers.

Meanwhile the Minister of the Interior (Terrier) warned the Maire of the approaching disturbance, and Pétion sent Sergent early on the morning of the 20th to see what was happening. In the *Memoir* dictated in 1847 he says—

"Roland, Servan, and Clavières held their portfolios for a very short time; a keener insight had guided Sergent when he refused office; he would have been dismissed like the others. The disgrace of these

three Jacobins made a stir in the Assembly, in the Municipality, and among the people. Their partisans made use of the general discontent which had followed the king's refusal to sanction certain decrees, and on the 20th June the Faubourg St. Antoine armed at daybreak to carry an address to the Assembly. This is well known, but what is not known is the part taken by Sergent on this day. He went at five o'clock in the morning to the Faubourg, and by six he had dispersed the crowd, made them put back the guns, one of which had served him as a platform whence to address the people. The workmen returned to their business. There was no mention of going to the king at the Tuileries.

"At eight o'clock the Maire sent word to Sergent that the crowd had formed again; he went back, but he found that it had already reached the beginning of the Boulevard, marching in good order, and without confusion. At their head was Santerre, who told Sergent that after his departure some deputies from the Assembly came to say that it would receive them, and that they might defile before them in arms. The leaders assured him of the truth of what their chief said, and Sergent could not resist their determination. At that time there was only the legion belonging to the district, but during the long march it was reinforced by all the idle, turbulent vagabonds that it encountered, and perhaps by some who were paid for joining."

The official reports published in the *Revue Retro-*

spective for 1834 (page 162, et *sequitur*) leave no doubt of Pétion's connivance.[1] The Minister of the Interior, Terrier, urged him on the 19th June to maintain order, and to send some battalions of the National Guard for this purpose. Pétion ordered the National Guard to march *with* the mob, thus identifying itself with the movement. Again, early on the 20th, Terrier repeats his injunction, and also desires that the entrances to the Tuileries may be defended. It is absurd to suppose that the police could not have stopped the procession; but on it went, every quarter, every street furnishing its contingent, old and young, men, women and children; some bearing regular arms, others brandishing pikes, fire-irons, knives; some in rags, others in uniform, dancing the Carmagnole, singing obscene songs, waving disgusting standards (one was a gibbet with the figure of the queen hanging on it, another a bleeding calf's heart, with *cœur d'aristocrat* written underneath it, another a pair of breeches with *Vivent les sans-culottes* as a legend.) The procession took three hours defiling through the Rue St. Honoré to the door of the Assembly, which at that time occupied all the space which is now the Rue de Rivoli, up to the Allée des Feuillants in the garden of the Tuileries. By this time the crowd amounted to 40,000. Rœderer, the Procureur Syndic,[2] advised the deputies to refuse admittance, but Vergniaud and the Gironde, backed by the Montagne, ordered the doors to be thrown open. The spokesman of the insurrection, Huguenin, made a treasonable address, offering to force the king at the sword's point to pass the decrees. This was followed by the half crazy populace dancing, singing, gesticulating, brandishing their swords, and waving their standards for the space of

[1] Lamartine's description in the *Histoire des Girondins*, vol. ii., entirely coincides with these reports.

[2] This functionary is now called the Préfet de la Seine.

three hours, to the disgust of all the deputies who cared for the dignity of the Assembly. From the Salle de Manège the motley crowd proceeded to the Palace. Instead of defending the entrances, the National Guard, urged some say by the Girondins, threw them open to the mob, among whom Pétion had taken care to mingle some of their brethren. Confiding in the promises of the Maire, the king had not suspected this attack; but soon the mob thundered at the doors, and always anxious to prevent bloodshed, he left his family in an inner room, ordered the door of the council chamber to be thrown open, and presented himself with calmness to the assailants. The Princess Elizabeth alone had been able to follow him. She hoped to be taken for the queen, and thus perhaps save her sister-in-law's life. The king seated himself on a chair, which was placed on a table, so that all might see him, and a little band of devoted followers, with three grenadiers who had remained staunch, surrounded him, and beat back the pikes and sticks which were aimed at the unfortunate monarch. For hours he was exposed to the insults and jeers of the multitude, but his courageous and dignified attitude prevented any crime against his person. Meanwhile the queen in the bedchamber was going through a similar scene, and again her courage and beauty, and the grace and innocence of her children, melted the hearts of the spectators, even that of Santerre.

In the *Memoir* written in 1801, Sergent gives an account of this day, which differs in some respects from what he said in 1847—

"It has been printed that Panis and I went to the Café Gibé in the Faubourg St. Antoine between eight and nine to see whether the rioters were *earning their wages.* The writer was not aware that from five a.m. I had been haranguing, praying, threatening, employ-

ing every possible means of persuasion to prevent this crowd from collecting, and that after making all these useless efforts I had been ordered to retire. At that time the only object was to present an address to the Assembly. There was no intention of penetrating to the Tuileries. It was proved at the time by declarations and *procès verbaux* that Mouchet and Panis, municipal officers, went to the Tuileries and ordered the gates to be shut on the approach of the crowd. They accused another municipal officer, who had not the reputation of being a Jacobin, of having opened the gates on the side of the Carrousel to the mob, which had been increased by all the idle, curious people that Paris could supply. Panis and I made every endeavour; the emissaries of Roland and Clavières and of Brissot (who was extraordinarily devoted to the two ex-ministers) destroyed all that Panis and I achieved. I do not accuse Servan of having co-operated in this intrigue; I had no proof of it. Clavières was seen during the day in the Carrousel running from group to group, saying 'he *must be asked* to recall the good ministers.'

"The *friends* of the king who tried to assassinate me the next day, the cowards who hid by his side hoping not to be seen, pretended not to have seen me turning the mob out of the apartments in which the king was besieged; not to have heard me cry to the men who were actuated more by curiosity than by the wish to insult him, 'Go away. The sun will soon disappear; perhaps there are some who are only

waiting for this moment to commit a crime which will be laid to your charge if you remain here; go back to your homes.' I thought that the foreign gold which has soiled every epoch of our Revolution would be at work now, if I did not succeed in delivering the king before night. I was the more inclined to think this, that the men who were brandishing at the ends of their pikes rolls of paper on which were written insulting devices and coarse incitements to murder, these men who affected drunkenness although they were sober, had not been among the crowd assembled in the Faubourg St. Antoine.

"You, too, who insulted me in that room, you who now dub yourselves with the name of *true republicans* in order to get hold of honourable and important employments, did it occur to you to help me when there were as many crowding up the grand staircase as there were streaming out of the door through which I made the mob defile? Not one of the officers of the armed force came forward, all had hidden themselves, for I found in the court the grenadiers of the section des Petits Pères, under arms, complaining of having no leader; they promised to follow and obey me. I then performed the duties of civil and military commander, and with their help I succeeded in evacuating the grand staircase and penetrating to the apartment in which the king was. I placed the grenadiers on guard in every direction, and preceding the king to the door of his bedchamber, I made him enter it without any followers except the Minister of War, Lajard,

some of the representatives of the people, and some officers whom I knew. I was afraid that an assassin would slip in and finish the day's proceedings with a crime. One of the doors was forced in by the pressure of the crowd behind it, which pushed back the grenadiers. I rushed towards the mob holding my official scarf extended, and swearing that they must trample me under foot before they should enter the king's chamber. My courage, my voice, which was recognized by some good citizens, arrested the multitude, which by falling back enabled the guards to shut the door.

"On this day, when I was enjoining obedience on the crowd by my expostulations, my hand was pierced by a drawn sword.

"Three of my colleagues were repeating my efforts in other directions. Some of the members of the department, and some municipal officers who were dispersed about the Château and the garden, and who (although swelling with indignation and pronouncing the name of the king with idolatrous respect, did not run to perish at his side, to terminate the cruel trial to which he was exposed) occupied themselves in preparing the materials for the denunciation of Pétion; they abandoned Louis to the insults he was enduring, because they hoped to make sure of getting rid of the Maire."

So ended the famous 20th June, as Sergent calls it —the *Journée des dupes.*

CHAPTER VIII.

1792.

The King rebukes Sergent—One hundred camp-bedsteads—Sergent hustled at the Tuileries—Montjourdain—Sergent refuses money from the Court—Lafayette—Marceau—Sergent's confession of Faith—Royalist plots—Baiser de Lamourette—*Fête* of the Federation—Mallet-Dupan's mission—Brunswick manifesto—Country in danger—Abortive conspiracy—Esprémesnil—Marseillais—Pétion in bed—August 10th, Tuileries stormed—Royal family in the Assembly—Removed to the Temple.

THE *Journée des dupes* produced the opposite effect to what was intended; universal sympathy was felt by all but the conspirators with the sufferings of the royal family. Sergent is very angry with the king for resenting the insults which were heaped upon them.

[1] "At eight o'clock on June 21st, the Maire, Sergent, and another municipal officer were introduced to the king's presence. There was a circle of courtiers. The king spoke very harshly to the Maire on the occurrences of the day before. Pétion replied with firmness that his conduct would be judged by the nation. The king complained that the police was ill administered, and did not know what was going on clandestinely in Paris. 'Here, sire,' replied Pétion,

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847.

'is the police administrator who yesterday dispersed the multitude at five o'clock; he can give an account of his watchfulness.' 'Sire,' said Sergent, 'the police is always on the watch, and I will prove this by informing your Majesty of a circumstance which is unknown to you; two hundred camp-bedsteads are in the attics of the Tuileries.' 'That is not true' (the king was angry, the queen smiled). 'When a magistrate of the people has the privilege of presenting himself before the Chief of the State, he tells nothing but the truth; your Majesty may this instant ascertain that I am not trying to deceive, the fact will bear witness.' 'I repeat, sir, that it is not true.' 'Sire, I persist in my assertion, and I ask your Majesty to grant me only a week to present a list of the names of those who are to occupy the two hundred beds.' 'Gentlemen, you may withdraw,' was the only answer the king made. The queen smiled no longer.

"This conversation has been falsely represented; this is the only true account."

Sergent's irritable vanity suffered much from the king's reproaches, and from this time he shows a determined hostility to the Court.

[1] "Early on the morning of the 21st I returned to the Château with M. Viguier, my colleague. I promised the Maire to stay there all day, to disperse another crowd which was already assembling. The chief officers and officials were very courteous, very humble in their manner as long as the crowd was

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

besieging the gates; they talked only of their respect for the Municipality. I succeeded in dissipating the groups by posting up a notice myself on each gate, forbidding any one to approach, or to stop at the gate. I dictated the same thing to five or six copyists. The Maire had just arrived, accompanied by Citizen Mouchet; we were drawn into a barrack belonging to the Staff in the Grande Cour. The pretext was that they wanted to ask for orders. The barrack was soon surrounded by chasseurs and grenadiers; they insult the Maire; I fly to the door, dragging him with me into the court. I am immediately seized by my hair, my collar, and by my scarf, which they try to tear from me. Pétion is surrounded and hustled in another direction; thinking that he only was the object, I try to follow and defend him. Mouchet also was attacked. I was pushed against the wall, and kept back by threats. Among those who insulted me I recognized Montjourdain, the head of a battalion. A chasseur held a pistol at my back; a gunner snatched it away just as it was going off. A grenadier rushed upon me from the ranks, pointing a bayonet; it was struck aside by one of his comrades. The former, enraged at having been stopped, gave me a blow which doubled me in half, and he tried to disengage his arm to strike me again. A number of citizens of all ranks rushed forward, threw themselves between me and my assassins, and delivered me from their fury. It seemed as if the officers of the National Guard had marshalled them under the king's window

on purpose to give him the spectacle of the assassination of the Maire and municipal officers. I must render justice to the Guard. Disorder broke out in their ranks, loud murmurs were heard, they provoked some of their own officers, and if we had uttered a single word the citizens would have turned their arms against each other. The department informed the king of this event, and he ordered the ringleaders to be arrested, and on the next day a notice was posted up ordering the punishment of these excesses.

"A week afterwards the grenadier received a captain's commission, '*de par le Roi*,' and the department which had assisted in this mystification did not even take the trouble to lodge an information. It would have been an act of cowardice on my part if I had left my post while duty kept me there. I dined with M. Viguier (who had not been insulted) at the '*Suisse*' in the *Passage des Feuillants*. A deputation of officers of the National Guard came to express their sorrow. Strange to say, Montjourdain, who had threatened me in the morning, was the orator of the deputation. I was begged not to destroy those who had attacked me. I replied in the words of Cato, 'I do not remember that you struck me.' In the evening I had to relate the facts to the Council-General of the commune. The Maire and those with him had already given their testimony. All sides cried out, 'Name your assassins; they shall be made examples of.' 'I will show you,' I replied, 'those who saved me; do not urge me to tell you

who those were that attempted my life' (the side that was unfavourable to the Jacobins applauded). '*No indulgence for the guilty*,' exclaimed the rest of the Assembly, '*name them*.' 'No,' I answered, 'I have promised the deputation of the National Guard, that even if I saw them before me I would give no sign of recognizing them, and I will keep my word.'

"Two years afterwards Montjourdain was brought before the revolutionary tribunal. He was, among other things, accused of having been one of those most eager to destroy me on the 21st June. His wife was advised to call on me. It was not difficult for me to persuade her that the denunciation did not come from me. I dried her tears, saying, 'I have forgotten everything, madame, and if my testimony be all that is needed to restore your husband to you, be happy, you shall have it. If the tribunal does not summon me, you may summon me on your side.' This was the only time that I appeared as a witness before a criminal tribunal, and it was not my fault that the unfortunate Montjourdain was not restored to his family.

"It will perhaps appear strange that I came forward so often under trying circumstances instead of my colleagues. It was because Pétion, the Maire, was a fellow-townsman of mine. We had studied together —this was an additional reason for confidence. Panis was in feeble health. He owned that he was not equal to great popular movements. If there was any confusion he could not make himself heard. The

Maire had no confidence in Viguier, who was incapable of speaking to the people on occasions when it was necessary to lay hold of the passions of an irritated or mistaken crowd, and to know how to direct them.

"Perron, the fourth administrator, declared that he could not leave his office on account of his age and infirmities. The General Council and the municipal body were divided in two parties, which came into collision every day. Many of the municipal officers were quite competent to serve in the midst of the storms which arose, but some rejoiced in their frequency because they belonged to the opposition; others were employed elsewhere, and were not near the Maire as we were (our offices were in the Mairie). I was nearest of all, and when it was necessary to call upon administrators in the night I was always the one chosen. Pétion was aware that although ardent and passionate, I was able to preserve my self-command, and could therefore foresee and execute all that had to be done."

[1] "The Court sent agents, one of whom was a deputy, to offer M. Sergent a million francs to be distributed among the editors of some of the Parisian newspapers which called themselves liberal, to induce them to accept, and among needy authors, to persuade them to write, articles to influence the leading members in the Assembly, to excite attachment to the king, and persuade the public

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847.

of his good intentions. 'You will not have to render an account of the employment of this sum. It is secret service money.' M. Sergent replied, 'I will not receive any secret service money, and I will give in my accounts, I therefore refuse absolutely. Tell the king that I think an honest magistrate would dishonour himself if he bought public opinion with gold. This would be corruption. If his Majesty will only be faithful in executing, and causing his ministers to execute, the laws which he has sanctioned; if he will only be equally just to all citizens; if he will send away the evil counsellors who have been imposed upon him, he will enjoy not only the favourable opinion but the love of the people, and he will not need to spend a million in secret services.'"

As soon as Lafayette heard of the disgraceful scene on the 20th June, he rushed to Paris to make one last attempt at saving the monarchy. He appeared before the Assembly on June 28th, demanded the punishment of the agitators, and attempted to get together the loyal members of the National Guard to oppose the Jacobins. But the Court had no faith in him; some say the queen, with a fatal blindness, betrayed his plan to Danton, and a stop was put to it by the obedient Maire. In less than a month two commissioners were sent to arrest him at the head of his army. He retaliated by imprisoning them. Finding that his authority was gone, he escaped from the army, was taken prisoner by the Austrians, and shut up for five years in the fortress of Olmütz. Sergent's brother-in-law, Marceau, was at that time *Chef de Bataillon* of the volunteers of the Eure et Loire, under Lafayette.

F. A. Marceau né à Chartres en 1769, Général de Division à 23. ans, mort de ses blessures à 27. ans, à Altenkirchen ses cendres reposent près de Coblence.

Scogent Marceau del. et Sc.

[1] "Although very young, Marceau was already distinguished. He was desired to take the commissioners as prisoners to the fortress, with an escort from his battalion, and he marched close to the commissioners, whose character he respected, and excused himself for performing the duty imposed on him as a soldier by his chief. 'But do not be uneasy,' he said, 'I shall later on repair this involuntary insult to the orders of the Assembly; I shall at once occupy myself with the means of setting you free.' (This is what Marceau wrote to me, and this was repeated in the Assembly by Kersaint, when he embraced and presented him to the Convention as his liberator.) Marceau represented to the volunteers in his own battalion, and to other officers, this act of Lafayette's as an *attentat* (criminal attempt). It was immediately noised abroad throughout the army; the murmurs and exasperation of all the young fellows who had flown with such ardour to the frontier, threatened an insurrection. General Lafayette showed himself; he harangued and commanded, but the bolt had fallen; he had lost their confidence, and he was obliged to plunge on horseback into the river, and fly to the frontier; many shots were fired at him by the troops he left behind him. There were too many witnesses of this scene for its truth to be questioned. I may add that Marceau, whose name is illustrious as a man and a soldier, while admiring the talents of Lafayette,

[1] Introduction to Sergent's Historical Notes.

never trusted him after the first arrival of the *Fédérés* from Chartres; he was among them when Lafayette harangued them, on the 15th July, from the pulpit of St. Roch. Marceau was lodging with me, and he told me and his sister during dinner that 'Lafayette's speech had not the frankness he expected; its tone was that of a man who wished to conceal his motives. He had none of the enthusiasm which was clinging to us all after the ceremony we had just witnessed, which treated all the French people as brothers.[1] He addressed us as if we were blind and submissive soldiers, forgetting that the next day, when we doffed our uniforms, we should become again simple citizens, with the right to judge how far our obedience to law should extend. In fact, M. de Lafayette wished to chain the National Guard to the foot of the throne; the Court wished to proclaim him generalissimo. It would have been a great blunder, and the Parisians, who pushed their idolatry to the extent of kissing his horse, behaved like slaves, as well as the grenadiers —all rich men, soldiers on parade, who will never be seen on a field of battle.' 'I expressed these opinions,' I said, 'in an assembly of the district St. Jacques—M. de Lafayette will not accept the honour of commanding the armed citizens of Paris until he has received permission from the king; that is, he will accept the post of protector of our rights only from the hands of the authority against which we have armed ourselves. Let us not deceive ourselves. When

[1] The first *fête* of the Federation, July 14, 1790.

we seized the guns of the Invalides, searching the cellars of a royal establishment for arms; when we laid siege to the Bastille, and after the victory murdered the governor who was charged to defend it by the king; when we sent our deputies to the Champ de Mars, where the regiments of the king's guards were stationed, to force them to lay down their arms, threatening, if they refused, to oppose our troops to theirs—we were in open revolt against the king, and yet the man who is chosen to command us will not accept the post without the kind permission of the king, who ought not to forgive us. I refuse my vote; time may perhaps alter my opinions.'

"No, my opinion has not changed. In M. de Lafayette setting off for the war in America, I saw only a young nobleman, tired of an inglorious peace, anxious to win by his sword some of the trophies with which his ancestors had adorned their standard. He and the Montmorencys, the Noailles, and many others, considered the continent of America as the scene of a vast tournament, and the English as the opponents against whom the French had always been used to draw the sword. No doubt their young hearts were convinced of the justice of their cause, and the name of Liberty was sacred to them, as they devoted their lives without any personal motive for such a sacrifice. They were young, and their souls were full of enthusiasm; now that they are old, what are these champions of Liberty doing in her cause? Lafayette, although he has not always

defended, has at any rate not betrayed her, or grovelled at the feet of foreign despots.

"I have restored to the prisoner of Olmütz the place he once occupied in my mind as General of the Parisian Guard, and one of the authors of the *Declaration of Rights*—that celestial revelation in every respect consonant with the principles of Christianity. I do not admire the conduct of the Emperor of Austria towards him, but it was both natural and politic, for every absolute sovereign must consider as criminal (and an infinitely dangerous example) the conduct of those who fought under the colours of insurrection, or rather of revolution."

After reading Sergent's confession of faith, which was probably that of many other active members of the Revolution, it is difficult to think that a stronger man than Louis XVI. could have maintained himself upon the throne.

Sergent and his friends were thoroughly frightened by the effect of the affair of the 20th. The party of the king had identified itself with the party of order and terrible reprisals; "a second St. Bartholomew massacre," he thought might be anticipated if, with the assistance of foreign armies, they should ultimately conquer.

To show the plots which were hatching, he relates the following circumstances—

[1] "In the month of July a tailor, who lived on the Quai des Augustins, came to my office to make an important revelation, which he would trust to no one else. Some men whom he did not know had asked

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

him to make one hundred red uniforms on the pattern of that of the Swiss Guard. He was to have the model, and part of the price advanced. The uniforms were to be fetched on the day agreed upon; the price was already fixed. 'There is a suspicious mystery in all this,' said the tailor. 'Every regiment has its captain, who sees to the clothing; if there is a bargain to be made the colonel comes forward; but these men were strangers. I think it my duty as a good citizen to inform the authorities. Besides, I should be suspected by my workmen, which would have unpleasant consequences. I will not make the uniforms.' 'Your declaration,' I said, 'shelters you from the consequences you fear; accept the agreement and fulfil it, for it is important for me to know who has given this secret order, and for what purpose. If you refuse, it will be offered to some one I know nothing about, and I shall lose all trace of this mystery.' I gave him an authorization to protect him from the embarrassing visit of our police, and I sent trustworthy agents to his house to watch for those who had given the order. The uniforms were carried off at night to a house in the Chaussée d'Antin. I could trace them no further. The same tailor came to tell me that one of his fellow-craftsmen had been ordered to make one hundred uniforms for the National Guard, that this appeared to him suspicious, because he was told that the king had ordered them, and intended to give them to honest workmen, who could not afford to clothe themselves.

I asked to see this tailor, and made him give me a signed declaration in writing, and in return I gave him a guarantee similar to the one I had given to the former. The uniforms were again taken away by night, and the tailor received no answer when he asked for the names of his employers. 'This money is worth as much as our names,' they replied, 'and will be more useful to your family.'

"Another circumstance. A master mason at work in the Tuileries came to make a declaration respecting an order of the Court architect, M. Heurtier, which he was to execute. In the vaulted roof of the Gallérie de Flore (now the museum) a large skylight was to be constructed, against which there would be room for at least six ladders. He had asked M. Heurtier in as indifferent a tone as possible what this was for, and the architect replied that 'it was no business of his.' This good citizen conceived a suspicion which may not have been unfounded. 'This opening,' he said, 'will be used on some fine night for the escape of the king and the royal family.' I wrote down a formal declaration, which he signed. This was enough, for the king was certainly entitled to make any alterations he pleased in the palace.'

"Again, the National Guard on duty at the palace took its guns thither, and brought them back when another legion took its place; but two caissons full of ammunition were always kept there. Each company of artillery, when it arrived at the palace, received the two caissons in the presence of the com-

mandant and chief officers of the legion, verifying their contents. One morning the commandant, Mandat, came to my office with his staff, all in much excitement. 'We found to-day,' he said, 'our two caissons entirely empty; the ammunition has been stolen, we come to ask you to repair this loss.' (Besides the police I was administrator, without salary, of the materials of the National Guard; and all that the arsenal of Paris contained was at my disposal.) 'No doubt, gentlemen, you bring with you a legal document certifying this loss, and ordering a regular investigation of the theft, which must have been committed under the eyes of two citizens in charge of the caissons, and two others standing by their guns.' 'No, I think we are worthy of belief, and the Guard cannot go through its duty without ammunition; you must give us an order for the colonel to receive it at the arsenal.' 'No, sir; when the theft is certified by a legal document, when a military instruction declares that you have suspended for twenty-four hours the sentries on duty, and that a military commission is already charged with investigating how and why this theft was committed, I will report the whole to the municipal council, which can alone authorize me to give the order you ask for. Protect your own responsibility, and I will take care of mine.' I obtained nothing but coarse threats and invectives from these soldiers. 'Observe, gentlemen,' I continued, 'that the administration of the National Guard has only the right to refuse your demands, but

if I answer you as chief of the police I shall have other rights over you. You may repent the tone in which you speak to me. I have the power of ordering you whithersoever I please. I now order you to withdraw.' They went to the Directory to complain. The Directory had no right to do more than demand an account of what I had done or ordered; its power was limited to approval or disapproval; it could not force me to execute its orders. It sent for me at midnight. The meeting was presided over by the honourable and unfortunate Duc de la Rochefoucauld. I was interrogated in an insolent tone by M. Brousse Desfaucherets as to why I refused to replenish the caissons. I answered as I had replied to the officers, and I persisted in my refusal unless superseded by the decision of the municipal council, observing to some of those present who said that I ought to conform to the orders of the Directory, that the Directory had no power to administer, but only to see that the law was observed, and that therefore I was within my right. I was ordered to retire while they deliberated. The Duke was near me. Just as I was going out he took my hand and said kindly, 'You may be sure, M. Sergent, that the Assembly will be just to you.' 'Yes, M. le Duc, if every member be as virtuous as you are.' I went out; a few minutes afterwards an usher came to tell me to go home, and that the Directory would let me know the result of their deliberation on the following day. The affair ended here. It was not until a few days afterwards that the

municipal council decided that I might replenish the caissons. The commandant was sent for, and reproved by the Maire. But it was not known what became of the cartridges, stolen probably while the four obliging sentinels were slumbering at their post. The municipal body would not pursue the affair.

"Is it not evident from the above facts that the two hundred camp-bedsteads, the one hundred red uniforms, the one hundred blue uniforms, and the skylight in the roof are parts of the same conspiracy, to which the theft of the ammunition was to be added?"

Sergent mentions another plot in the *Memoir* written in 1801.

"It was not known in Paris, that in order to disturb its tranquillity, and to put an end to the lives of the municipal officers, a plot was laid for sending away all the bakers' boys on pretence of enrolling them in the army. We were told of this at noon, and by eight o'clock in the evening I had prevailed on five hundred of them to return to their masters. I found them assembled in the Rue Neuve St. Martin, where some commissioners were enrolling them in the name of the king. They were to have started on the following morning, and money had been given them for drink. Imagine the frightful consequences of the sudden departure of all the bakers' apprentices—not a loaf could have been obtained in Paris."

The Court, however, had not the monopoly of conspiracies.

[1] "The Federates, informed by M. Sergent of all the secret machinations of the Court, and of the little confidence to be put in some members of the Corps Législatif, who called themselves Girondins, formed themselves into a committee, to meet at the corner of the Boulevard du Temple. They deliberated in private, for not even many self-called patriots were admitted to the conferences. They wanted a Republic to be established. Although it was known that Pétion shared their opinions, he was not admitted because he was a Girondin. The other party was composed of these same Girondins, and of the Marseillais Barbaroux, who had attached himself to the minister Roland, and obtained the esteem and entire confidence of Madame. Pétion inclined chiefly to them, and was present at their conferences. This was the *Moderate* party; they proposed to depose the king legally, and substitute the heir with a Regency. The third party was that of the Court, which the two others were determined to oppose.

"M. Sergent was able, by means of his signature, to dispose of the National Guard, and to post it wherever he pleased. This honourable force was composed of 80,000 men, all ready for action. He also had power over the whole arsenal, and could thus arm his little army. He recalled to Paris the Gardes Française, which had been disbanded after the taking of the Bastille, when the Court despatched the 'Watch' (*Le Guet*), as it was called, to the

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847.

frontiers, and thus left the capital without any soldiers of the line, and the theatres without defence, for the National Guard refused this service. The troops recalled by him were lodged at first in the Faubourg St. Antoine, but he assigned them quarters in the old convent of the Cordeliers. Some patriots reproached him for separating the brave conquerors of the Bastille from the Faubourg which was so formidable to the Court. He replied—'I have my reasons for this; I wish to keep them to defend our liberty, which is continually threatened; they will be more useful in the centre than on the outskirts of the town, where there are plenty of devoted citizens, while I know that the conspirators are in force in the centre. When we cry "*À la garde!*" our men will fall upon them. Arms were laid ready for the Guard in all the theatres, under the care of the managers. I chose two non-commissioned officers as my aides-de-camp, both of whom served afterwards as generals in the army of Italy, where, I think, they died. I procured in some second-hand warehouses a number of their old uniforms as Gardes Françaises, which I knew would be always agreeable in the eyes of the people.'"

With regard to the conspiracies of the Court, it was quite true that a number of gentlemen, dispersed over Paris, held themselves ready to respond to a summons, and repair to the Tuileries, to which they were admitted by tickets, as on February 28th, 1791 (the *Journée des Poignards*), that the Guard, which had been disbanded, was still receiving pay, and was

also ready to rally round the king. There was also the *Bande d'Angremont.*

[1] "Even assassination was permitted to its members. It had given us a great deal of trouble for a year before the 10th August. Laporte gave us three faithful citizens who enrolled themselves in this band by our orders, and told us all that was going on. Was there not a committee of *Juges de Paix*, who paid a certain sum weekly to this band by order of the king? Were there not a number of returned emigrants in the attics of the Louvre and Tuileries, who escaped through a hole in the roof on the 10th? Were there not a number of Chevaliers de St. Louis, who often came to mount guard over the king, and went away leaving their arms behind them? Were not those men guilty, who were paid by the Court to write insulting petitions and addresses to the Assembly, and gave three francs to every man who would carry them to the bar? Was there not a band of *claqueurs* in the Assembly paid to hiss and insult the deputies who spoke in favour of liberty?"

It is rather inconsistent of Sergent to be so scandalized at these proceedings while his own party was guilty of precisely the same system of spies, and *claqueurs* and agitators, and was now meditating a scheme involving deceit and corruption and bloodshed.

After the invasion of the 20th June the gates of the Tuileries gardens were closed to the public, but in consequence of the unpopularity of this measure a certain portion only was reserved.

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

[1] "The terrace of the Feuillants was free to the public. Some patriot drew a tricolor riband outside the trees with notices to desire the citizens not to step over it. Some expressed their derision of the king's shutting himself up like Louis XI. by calling the reserved portion Coblentz, whistling to their dogs if they ventured beyond the riband, or singing the refrain of a comic song—*N'allez pas, n'allez pas dans la forêt noire.*"

On the 6th July one of those sudden revulsions of feeling which take place in excited times for a moment united the king and the people. An aged abbé appealed to the Assembly to put a stop to the dissensions.

"We all," he said, "desire only the good of the nation, why should we not abjure and execrate all party differences and join in universal brotherhood?"

The audience responded, Right embraced Left, Girondins rushed into the arms of Jacobins, there was universal enthusiasm which the good king came to share. This was called the *Baiser de Lamourette.* Before night, however, the news of the suspension of Pétion and Manuel for their share in the 20th June cooled this ardour, and gave an impetus to the conspiracies of the Jacobins. There was not much fear of a serious reaction. The men from the south, obedient to the call of Barbaroux, were on their way. On they came, many of them desperate characters; singing the solemn inspiriting hymn just composed by young Rouget de Lisle, called after them the Marseillaise.[2]

[1] From Sergent's notes on *Histoire d'un demi siècle.*

[2] Sergent says, in his introduction to *Historical Notes*, that the refrain, *Qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons*, refers to the Prussians, not to the Aristocrats.

This formidable reinforcement to the revolutionary ranks alarmed the ministers, and the Maire having been suspended, they applied through the Directory to Sergent to stop the entry of the Marseillais into Paris.

[1] "The reason assigned was that in some letters these men were said to be all brigands, that they were committing all sorts of excesses on their way, and that they intended to assassinate the royal family.

"These letters were produced; all were unsigned. 'And,' I replied, 'it is in consequence of these anonymous letters that the department wishes the Municipality to shut the gates against citizens sent by another town conformably with a decree of the Legislative Assembly? I shall not lend myself to a measure which is so insulting to the commune and citizens of Marseilles.' 'You accept the responsibility of what may happen in consequence of your refusal?' rejoined the commissioners. 'Yes, I accept the responsibility.' 'We will leave with you copies of our requisition and of the letters; will you give us a receipt?' 'Enough, gentlemen, I throw anonymous letters into my waste-basket.' 'What do you mean?' 'To show you the contempt every magistrate ought to feel for anonymous accusations.' The commissioners went away not very well satisfied, and I heard no more from the Directory, which, it was well known, was sold to the Court."

The Marseillais did not arrive in time for the *fête* of the Federation on the 14th, but Pétion was rein-

[1] Sergent's notes on Prudhomme.

stated by the Assembly on the 13th, and was the hero of the day. This *fête* was arranged by Sergent, and cost 200,000 francs. According to the programme, the king was to have arrived with the Assembly, and marched on the left of the president to the altar; but his Majesty preferred to surround himself "more like an Asiatic satrap," as Sergent quotes from the *Révolutions de Paris*, "than the king of a free country, with an escort of troops."[1] He had to wait for the Assembly in consequence of this change. Close to the altar was a tree on which were hung all the symbols of feudalism—crowns, mantles, cardinals' hats, keys of St. Peter, titles of nobility, escutcheons, &c. The king was to have set it on fire, but he excused himself, saying that "Feudalism was already destroyed," and he went away directly after swearing the oath. Sergent says that the king swore the oath, which was scarcely audible, from the amphitheatre where he and the Court were placed; he says he was close to Louis XVI. at the time. This does not agree with Madame de Staël's touching description of her alarm at seeing him march to the altar, and her relief when he came back. The *fête* was disorderly, Sergent says, on account of the king's escort, it was so much more splendid than that of the Sovereign People that it scandalized all beholders; a foreigner would have thought it was a royal instead of a national celebration. There was no enthusiasm, however, except for Pétion; cries of *Vive le vertueux Pétion!* resounded on all sides—*Pétion ou la mort!*

[2] "The gunners of the Federation proposed to proclaim Pétion Dictator, and wished him to join them in demanding the deposition of Louis XVI. This

[1] Notes on Prudhomme. Prudhomme's account is insulting in the extreme to Louis XVI.

[2] Notes on Prudhomme.

proposal was made at the foot of the altar; they swore upon their guns to maintain their choice. Pétion refused to consent to what he called this extravagant proposal. He told me of it in the evening, making me promise secrecy."

The Maire and the President of the Assembly set fire to the tree, which "amused the people very much." But the *féte* was a melancholy contrast to the first celebration on July 14th, 1790, when all were full of faith and hope. Sergent says that it was the fault of the Court.

[1] "Just before the ceremony I saw that there was some disturbance; a group of people were dragging along an abbé, whom they accused of stealing watches. They cried, 'Let us hang him on one of these trees.' I tore him from the hands of the rioters; not one of the National Guard tried to save him. I sent for the commandant, and reproached him severely for not doing his duty. I took the abbé to the police-station. No stolen goods were found upon him. He was a victim chosen by the Court to interrupt the *féte*, and give the king an excuse for withdrawing, accusing the magistrates of negligence and the people of ferocity."

The king believed that the whole nation was oppressed as well as himself by a band of fanatics. He had no idea of betraying France into the hands of Germany, but his only hope now was that the advance of the Austrians and Prussians would terrify the usurpers, protect the party of order, and enable him with their assistance to restore a stable govern-

[1] Notes on Prudhomme.

ment. At the same time he implored the emperor to suspend active hostilities, and to issue a conciliatory manifesto which would enable France to retire without shame. He urged that any brilliant victory would assuredly put the lives of himself, the queen, and their children, and all attached to them, in the utmost jeopardy. Mallet-Dupan, a young Genevese, was entrusted with this mission. Conferences with the ministers of the Emperor, the King of Prussia, and the Count de Cobentzel, took place on the 15th and 16th of July. Mallet-Dupan painted in forcible language the awful position of the Court. The negotiators were affected to tears, and promised to regulate their conduct in accordance with the wishes of the king. "Nevertheless," they said, "we cannot conceal from you that the views of the French princes are different. They announce their intention of conquering France in order to upset the Revolution, to dethrone their brother, and proclaim a Regency." Soon afterwards there was a great meeting at Mayence of the allies, who, under the influence of the princes and the emigrants, decided on immediate aggression.

The celebrated manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, couched in threatening, almost insulting terms, brought matters to a crisis, and set Paris in a flame.

Nothing could have been more opportune for the Jacobins. It was another crime to be laid to the charge of the sanguinary Louis XVI. and his Austrian queen. The *décheance* was again loudly demanded. Every department was now in the hands of the extreme party.

On the 15th July the troops of the line were sent away from Paris, and on the 16th the foot gendarmes were chosen from the Gardes Françaises who had served the Revolution in June 1789. On the 17th, Pétion instituted a central bureau for the forty-eight sections; every day a commissioner brought the decrees

of his section and received those of the other forty-seven. These commissioners deliberated together; they had a president, a secretary, and all the regular forms of a council. They were installed in the Hôtel de Ville. The Assembly had already proclaimed the country in danger on July 11th.

[1] "The Legislative body decreed a levy of volunteers. Paris was to furnish three thousand, and Lajard, the Minister of War, had in the king's name ordered registers to be placed in the notaries' offices for the citizens to inscribe themselves. It was a measure more than ridiculous, and scarcely two hundred volunteers came forward. I pointed out the futility of this royal measure, and proposed the solemn and touching ceremony which was executed by my orders on Sunday the 22nd of July. Early in the morning signal guns announced the *fête*, and discharges of artillery went on every hour throughout the day. At ten o'clock the municipal officers mounted on horseback issued from the Hôtel de Ville bearing a huge tricolor flag with the inscription—*Citoyens, la patrie est en danger.* They were followed by artillery and several detachments of the Garde Nationale;[2] there were other banners with the legend 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Responsibility.' The whole was preceded by solemn music. After the proclamation was read (I chose for this purpose those municipal officers who had the most

[1] Notes on Prudhomme.

[2] Prudhomme says that he wishes there had been more pikes among them.

imposing presence and the most sonorous voices), the enrollings on amphitheatres in the principal public places followed. Tents were erected, covered with garlands of bay and oak leaves, a pike on each side crowned with the *bonnet rouge*, and the flag of each section in front. An imposing group of municipal authorities in full dress sat at a table resting on two drums, and presided over the registers. There were sixty bands of music. A rush of youthful volunteers, generous and ardent, overflowed the Place, altogether offering a new and animated spectacle, more curious and interesting than the Revolution had yet afforded. As each volunteer enrolled himself a venerable officer embraced him, presented him with a laurel wreath, and a roll of drums proclaimed the enlistment. Solemn music was again played while he was leaving the amphitheatre. The enrolment went on for two days, and 5000 men were inscribed on the registers amidst the acclamations of the people; the example was followed throughout the country, and gave us those legions which drove the Prussians out of Champagne."

On the 26th an abortive attempt at insurrection took place.

[1] "A general struggle was imminent. The Maire (Pétion) knew nothing of the republican combinations, he counted upon the decision of the Assembly in favour of the Regency, and was to be told neither of the means nor the objects of the other party; so on the day when the latter had settled that the attack

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847.

should take place in the following night, it was announced in Paris that the Marseillais and other Federates would give a dinner in the Faubourg St. Antoine on the ruins of the Bastille, which indeed came to pass, and many people collected to look on. M. Sergent was with Pétion, and just as dinner was coming up the Commissioner of Police from the Faubourg St. Antoine (who knew nothing of the plot) entered and informed the Maire that there were preparations in his faubourg for an outbreak which might become serious, and as a proof he drew out of his pocket a banner of red silk, on which was embroidered in yellow letters 'Martial law against tyrants.' 'It is probably intended,' he said, 'to collect a crowd of citizens under this banner.' Pétion thanked him, and sent him back to his faubourg, saying to the police official, who had heard everything, 'You must concert your measures together.' A few hours afterwards some officers from the National Guard of Versailles called likewise on the Maire. M. Sergent was still present, and he heard that these men came officially to say that some citizens and Federates had sent a deputation to the Versailles Guard to ask them to join the National Guard of Paris who would have need of their help on the following night; but before quitting home these officers wished to consult the Maire, to ascertain his wishes, and receive his orders; they begged him to give them a written answer, that they might show it to their superiors. Pétion asked what were the motives for

their coming to Paris?' The deputation replied, 'We know nothing except that the National Guard may be suddenly attacked, and wishes us to join in its defence.' 'You have been deceived,' answered Pétion, 'there is no agitation in Paris, and I will give you a written order to that effect, desiring you to return quietly home. The police here is always on the watch.'

"When they had gone away, however, Pétion said to Sergent, 'Will you go with me to the ruins of the Bastille, and see what goes on after this banquet, for that red flag and those Versailles guards have made me rather uneasy.' When they reached the spot they found only a great crowd, dancing, singing, drinking. Pétion thought it his duty to harangue his fellow-citizens, who were astonished at seeing him. While he was exhorting them to retire peaceably because night was coming on, a man seized M. Sergent roughly by the arm, drew him into a dark corner, and said to him in a very decided tone, 'What are you here for with your Maire?' The man was Westermann,[1] who has since become a brigadier-general. The conversation grew confidential. 'The affair must be put off,' said M. Sergent, 'to another day, this is all I can tell you; a few hours ago a red flag was shown to the Maire, and some officers from the Garde Nationale of Versailles came to tell him that they had been asked to join their comrades in

[1] He led the insurgents on the 10th of August, and was guillotined in 1794.

Paris, and that they were ready to obey his orders. This was the object of their visit. The Maire sent these men home, so everything is upset; the time must be altered, and I am going to give orders not to sound the tocsin to-night; go to your committee and consult on the new measures to be taken in consequence of the information I have just given you.' Fresh plans were laid, and we now reach the 9th August."

Pétion, indeed, would scarcely have been a hero on the field of battle, for Sergent tells us of his behaviour on the 27th of July.

[1] "D'Eprémesnil, a Constitutionalist, one of the chief promoters of the States-General, who had been a favourite of the people in the early days of the Revolution, was insulted by the Federates in the Gardens of the Tuileries, and dragged, wounded and almost dying, by some National Guards to their barracks in the Palais Royal. The building was soon surrounded by a crowd clamouring that he might be delivered to them, because, they said, he had insulted the nation. Pétion ran to the scene of action. As usual, he fainted away at the sight of the blood with which the unhappy d'Eprémesnil was covered. I was sent for to disperse the multitude, which was increasing and whose cries were becoming alarming. The Maire was carried home. I swore to Eprémesnil and his family that I would save him if they would trust me. I took him to the Abbaye in a carriage, escorted by the guard of the section. Lavaquerie, warder of

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

the Abbaye, received a written order from me to give him a room and all the care his condition required; to let him speak to his family and friends, and to allow him to leave the prison as soon as it was advisable. This was the only way to save him. Five days after he escaped."

The Marseillais reached Paris on the 30th.

[1] "The Federates from every department rose at the call of their deputies to repulse the common foe, and marched to the capital to join their arms with those of the Parisians. An endeavour was made to set the Marseillais at variance with the inhabitants on the very day of their arrival. Some grenadiers of the National Guard got up a quarrel in the Champs Elysées, where the Marseillais were partaking of a supper to which they had been invited. The signal for a fray was given, and the Marseillais were victorious. Two guards were taken to the barracks of St. Lazare. News was brought to the Maire of what was going on. Panis flew to the Champs Elysées, I to the Rue St. Lazare. I pierced through an immense crowd which surrounded the house in which the Marseillais were lodged and were calling for the heads of the grenadiers. Bourdon (afterwards De l'Oise), drunk, as he always was, was brandishing his sword in front of the windows of the room in which the prisoners were confined, and screaming like a madman, 'We must get rid of the assassins!' He wanted them to be delivered, all bleeding as they

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

were, to the crowd at the door. The Marseillais shuddered at the idea. The estimable Moisson, who commanded them, stopped the vociferations of Bourdon—of this man who had long been turned out of the club of the Jacobins. At nightfall I helped the escape of the grenadiers; they were accompanied to the Boulevards by some of the Marseillais, whose courage and generosity, added to our precautions, extinguished the spark that had been kindled of civil war."

The king's friends surrounded him, urging opposite measures. The venerable Malesherbes, who was to pay for his devotion with his life, urged the king to abdicate. The emigrants wished him to escape, with Lafayette's help, to Compiègne, and thence into Belgium. The Duc de Liancourt-Rochefoucauld (the same who, on the 6th September, 1789, said to his royal master, "Sire, it is not a revolt, it is a revolution") commanded the province of Normandy, which was still loyal. He offered the Château of Gaillon, near Rouen, to the royal family, who could easily have escaped thence into England. He also offered the whole of his fortune, reserving only one hundred louis a year to his children. On August 7th the king consented to accept the Duc de Liancourt's offer, but on the next morning he changed his mind. The queen refused to trust the Constitutional party; she said she would rather perish than fall into the hands of those from whom she had suffered so much. The Jacobins were not cheated of their prey. Pétion was comfortably got out of the way.

[1] "Towards evening (August 9th) Pétion was sent for to the Tuileries. Madame Pétion was rather

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847.

uneasy, and sent word to Sergent, who despatched his two aides-de-camp several times to gain information. At first there seemed no cause for anxiety; but as night came on, and the Maire, although he could not possibly have been kept so long in audience, did not return, our anxiety at the Mairie went on increasing. At length one of the aides-de-camp sent by us brought word that he had seen the Maire coming down the grand staircase, followed by several officers, and heard threats uttered by the grenadiers of the National Guard. The aide-de-camp had fears for the Maire's life; he drew near to him, and the Maire said to him in a low voice, 'Keep quietly by my side.' The injunction was not unnecessary, for several of the soldiers who surrounded them were kicking over the lamps lighted on the terrace of the Tuileries, so that they were nearly in the dark. One of the aides-de-camp said to the other, 'Run quickly to the Mairie, and say that the life of the Maire is in danger.' On this, the second report, Sergent sent a letter to Vergniaud, who was presiding over the Assembly (the sitting had luckily been protracted on account of an important debate), and another letter to Brissot, who was an intimate friend of Pétion's. He told them that the Maire's life was in danger at the Tuileries, and that an order must be sent from the Assembly to summon him at once, and that this order must be openly read by two ushers, accompanied by some of the guards attached to the Assembly, armed and provided with torches, and that

the measures must be prompt. They were executed at once, and the messengers from the Assembly found Pétion in the middle of the great avenue near the gardens, a part which was ill-lighted. The conspirators, frightened by the ushers and the torches, relinquished Pétion. On being brought before the bar of the Assembly, Pétion gave an account of what had passed at the Tuileries. The Assembly sent him to his house, and declared that their sitting should not terminate till daybreak. M. Sergent caused Pétion, who was stunned and frightened by the events of the evening, to be put to bed as soon as he reached home.

"The tocsin sounded in various directions, soon the drums begin to beat, the National Guard assemble, the cannon are dragged out of their sheds, and the inhabitants, aroused by the noise, pour into the streets, and form their march in regular order.

"The committee of the Federates, on the Boulevard du Temple, was composed of men of mark, whom it is as well to mention here. First, there was *Robespierre*, who attended the meetings assiduously; second, the journalist *Carra*, a distinguished literary man; third, *Joseph Chénier*, a celebrated poet; fourth, *Condorcet*, and among others, *Louvet*, author of the pretty novel, *Faublas*. He owed his reputation to this book, which was found in every library of distinction, although it has since been placed on the Index Expurgatorius.[1]

[1] For the honour of the insurrection, Sergent had better have suppressed most of these names.

"Names like these of men honoured in society were a sufficient guarantee for the wise conduct and urgent necessity of this insurrection. The crowd, swelled by citizens in arms, marched to the Hôtel de Ville, took possession of the seats of the commune, and appointed their own presidents and secretaries. The members of the commune, summoned by the tocsin to their duties, found their seats occupied, and a new board sitting. They tried to turn out their supplanters. The new president said, 'Your powers are over, and ours have begun; the assembled electors have conferred them on us.' There were, in truth, a great many electors among the new members of the Municipality. In the midst of the discussion, which was long, an elector called Léonard Bourdon, hearing several of the deposed members call for Pétion, was afraid that he might come. He therefore ran to the Mairie and asked if the Maire had returned. M. Sergent assured him that the Maire was in bed. Foreseeing that if the Maire were summoned to the committee he would feel obliged to invoke the law, to speak in favour of moderation, and re-establish the members that had been got rid of, M. Sergent advised Léonard Bourdon to double the guard in front of the Mairie, consign the Maire to his chamber, and allow no one to approach him unless Sergent were present. (I wish particularly to note this fact, because many writers have stated that Pétion ordered himself to be consigned to his room, either because he was afraid, or because he wished

his authority to be annulled.) At daybreak, the guard being doubled, a young doctor named Bozy, an ardent royalist, and who had been appointed lieutenant to the Maire with M. Royer-Collard, the secretary, and three other members of the Council, came to the Mairie and asked to speak with the Maire. The captain of the guard replied to them, 'Gentlemen, I do not know you; no one can speak to the Maire without the authorization of M. Sergent, or enter the house without his permission. These are my orders.' The deputies then asked for M. Sergent, who ordered them to be shown in. He asked what they wanted, and consented to admit them into the room where Pétion, exhausted with the fatigues of the day, was in bed. He was awakened. M. Bozy then told him all that had passed at the Hôtel de Ville, that they themselves had been dismissed and others put in their places, and that they came to ask for his advice and orders. Pétion was very much surprised that the drums had been beaten and the tocsin sounded without his orders, and turning to M. Sergent asked what all this meant. Sergent replied tranquilly that the inhabitants of Paris were determined to settle matters, to oppose a conspiracy of their own to the conspiracies of the Court, and thus prevent bloodshed. M. Royer-Collard on this announced to Sergent, 'Monsieur, you are included in the new assembly, which is called the Council of the Commune.' Sergent thanked him simply for this announcement, and promised that he

would continue to execute his duties with the same zeal as heretofore. The Maire, whose nerves had been upset by the fright he had at the Tuileries, hid his head under the bedclothes, crying out, 'Oh, the wretches, they want to destroy the country just when the Corps Législatif was about to decree the Regency,' and he turned his face to the wall and spoke no more.

"M. Sergent said to him, 'Be easy; at this moment the affair is taken in hand by wise men, and if they have adopted this sudden means of saving the country it is to make success more certain.' Sergent then turned to the deputies, saying, 'Gentlemen, the new commune consigns the Maire to his domicile; he cannot leave it.' The deputies took their leave. This is what took place at the Mairie.

"Danton, as well as Manuel, the one as Procureur de la Commune, the other as his substitute, preserved their functions; they armed themselves with swords, and marched at the head of the National Guards and Federates. The whole troop armed and full of fire, cried out, 'To the Tuileries!—to the Tuileries!' (Observe that Robespierre did not appear, for in fact there was cause enough to induce a timid man to hide in the cellar.) There was a crowd assembled in the Place de Grêve before the Hôtel de Ville, encouraging the belligerents with acclamations.

"As M. Sergent was master of the Arsenal he was able, without leaving the Mairie, to correspond by means of agents who came and went, constantly bringing news and executing his orders: the belligerents,

therefore, wanted none of the necessary provisions. It is thus that under Sergent's superintendence and activity the attack took place, of which we shall not give any details, as M. Sergent was not present. He occupied himself in maintaining tranquillity everywhere except on the scene of action. He had accomplished his object, which was to destroy the royal conspiracy. The consequences belonged to the National Assembly which was invested with the national authority." [1]

The troops collected to defend the Palace consisted of a regiment of Swiss numbering 900, an equal force of gendarmerie, 2500 National Guards, and some 400 nobles and gentlemen. Mandat, the commandant of the National Guards, disposed his troops to the best advantage, when he was suddenly summoned to the Hôtel de Ville, where the members of the municipal council were changed. His surprise was extreme when he found his measures for defence treated as criminal. He was seized, committed for trial, and shot dead by order of his judges as he was leaving the Hôtel de Ville. Santerre, who led the attack on the 20th June, was appointed commandant of the National Guards in his place.

The inhabitants of the Château had never gone to rest. The tocsin knelled from one steeple after another to summon the battalions, which were gradually closing in upon the Tuileries. The queen and her children were surrounded by their devoted servants, Madame de Tourzel, Madame de Lamballe, and others; the ministers assembled in the Salle de Conseil. The king showed his usual passive courage, and spent most of his time in prayer; from time to time the

[1] Sergent forgets that the new Municipality defied the Assembly.

royal family walked through the rooms, and the queen's greatness of soul raised the devotion of the nobles to enthusiasm. Towards morning the king went on to the terrace to review the troops, but his sad resigned attitude had no influence, and cries of *Vive la nation! A bas le Veto!* resounded on all sides. Resistance seemed hopeless, and Rœderer, the Procureur-General, who had spent the night between the Salle de Manège and the Château, entreated the king to take refuge in the Assembly. The king refused; the queen objected that they still had forces at their disposal. "Madame," rejoined Rœderer, "all Paris is marching on us." At length, to save his family and friends from the horrors of a successful assault, the king yielded. By the advice of Rœderer the royal family were accompanied only by the ministers and the civil officers of the department. The courtiers, with the exception of Madame de Tourzel, were obliged to remain behind.

The mournful group proceeded, guarded on each side by bayonets, and amidst the jeers and threats of the people, towards the Assembly, where they were met by a deputation of members, who escorted them into the hall. "Gentlemen," said Louis XVI., "I come amongst you to prevent a great crime." The king seated himself by the side of the president, but on its being represented that his ostensible presence prevented the liberty of debate, the royal family retired to the *logographe*, a small reporter's box behind the president's chair.

Almost as soon as they were seated, a heavy discharge of fire-arms announced that a struggle had begun; the door of the Assembly burst open, and an armed force appeared; the deputies ran to oppose its entrance; at last the tumult was appeased amidst the roll of musquetry, and cries of *Vive la nation, la liberté, l'égalité!*

Meanwhile a terrible massacre was going on at the Tuileries. Whether the insurgents or the defenders fired the first shot has always been disputed. Sergent says—

[1] "Let us recur to what passed at the Tuileries. The hall, the grand staircase, and the landing, were occupied by the Swiss; the Federates, the battalions of the National Guard, all in arms, march up to them. There is a parley; the Swiss in sign of peace empty their pouches, and throw down their cartridges; some of them are embraced by our insurgent troops; at this instant a volley from the top of the staircase, from the landing, kills and wounds the citizens, and even the Swiss. The former cry, 'We are betrayed.' Those who follow avenge them by firing at the Swiss on the staircase. Some are pierced by bayonets; others take refuge in their apartments, and were afterwards pursued. During this skirmish a rapid fire was going on between the citizens in the Court and the National Guards from the windows. It is well known that some battalions of the National Guard were in the Palace under officers who thought it their duty to defend it. Yet not one of these Guards was found by the insurgents after they had taken possession of the staircase and adjacent apartment. . . . One hundred of the conspirators returned from abroad (as was proved by the arrest after the 10th of emigrants with false names and passports), dressed in the Swiss uniform, fired from the top of the

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

staircase the first volley upon the armed citizens, and at the same time upon the real Swiss, who had been ordered not to fire.

"One hundred other conspirators in blue uniforms mixed with the National Guard, and fired from the windows into the Court. The real troops, deceived by this uniform, thought it right to imitate them, in obedience as they thought to their chiefs. In this way two hundred men in disguise compromised the lives of the Swiss Guards, and the honour if not the lives of the National Guards.

"Observe that the men who were concealed a month beforehand, remained during the action near the principal apartments for the convenience of escaping through the roof. Indeed an emigrant with whom I was intimate at Venice in 1804, and who since died at Padua, owned to me that he was one of these false *blue* soldiers, and that after their discomfiture he escaped with his companions through the skylight, and that he and several others joined the ranks of the battalions which were marshalled on the Quai Voltaire. The Count Lally-Tollendal, who was arrested with a false passport, and calling himself a cattle-dealer, owned in his interrogatory that he was in the Palace on the 10th.

"Some of the Swiss Guard, who were in their barracks at Courbevoie, on hearing what was going on at the Palace, trembled for their lives. They were determined to sell them dearly, but they would have infallibly perished. The Maire was informed that the

populace was streaming in the direction of Neuilly; the Federates themselves owned that they could not answer for the doings of this crowd, which was one of those which make their appearance on the field after the victory has been won. All were anxious and puzzled until I proposed a plan which I was sure of being able to execute, and which would infallibly save the lives of the Swiss regiment. There were in Paris two or three hundred of the French Guards, who had been refused entrance into the paid companies; or who had been turned out by Lafayette. The administration employed them to guard the theatres, because, since the departure of the paid troops, the National Guard refused this service. I gave a written order to Citizen Collette (now Adjutant-General) to assemble all these French Guards, decorated with their gold medals, and to lead them without arms to Courbevoie, to call forth the Swiss and put them in the middle, and march arm-in-arm with them to the Palais Bourbon, whither I at once sent all that was wanted from the barracks magazine (which was under my orders). This plan was executed amidst the cheers and acclamations of the crowd, who recognized by their crosses the brave fellows who had helped them to destroy the Bastille. They were joined by the Federates, and the Swiss, who a few hours before had feared that they would be murdered, marched in triumph from the Champs Elysées to their new habitation. Some were enrolled in our battalions, others returned to their own country."

The weather was exceptionally sultry, and for fourteen hours the royal family had to endure the stifling heat of the *logographe*, and, exposed to the gaze of hundreds, to listen to the volleys of musketry proclaiming the massacre outside, as well as to submit to the insults of the howling populace in the galleries. The king heard apparently unmoved the decree which deprived him of his crown.

From the Assembly the royal family were conducted to the Temple. After its fatal gates were closed upon them the king and queen were seen no more until the people, thirsting for their blood, were gratified by their execution.

The power which had been conferred by the fickle populace on so many in turn, was now wielded by Danton.

CHAPTER IX.

1792.

Danton—Revolutionary Tribunal—Marat—Executions—Funeral Fête—State of Prisons—Sergent loses influence in the Police—Arrests—People he saves—Calumnies—Robberies in Prisons—Sept. 1st., Man in the Pillory—Proclamation of the Commune—Sept. 2nd., Sergent returns from the Country—Saves two men—Longwy taken—Priests massacred—Effeteness of the Police—Pétion in consternation—Lally Tollendal—Washing out Blood-stains—Authors of the Massacres—Sergent refuses to pay the Assassins—Saves Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld—Abbé d'Antichamp and other Priests—Circular to the Provinces—Murder of Duc de la Rochefoucauld -Sergent flatters the People in a Speech—Is accused of stealing Jewels—Theft and recovery of the Crown Diamonds.

[1] "After the victory of the 10th August, the Legislative Assembly declared that its function was at an end; but before separating it convoked the Primary Assembly to appoint a National Convention, establish the government desired by the people, and pass sentence on those enemies who had brought about this second revolution, the chiefs of whom were confined in the Temple."

The Girondin ministers, Roland, Clavières, and Servan, were reinstated; but Danton, the Minister of Justice, alone had any real power; affairs, however, did not move fast enough to satisfy the populace.

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847.

"On the 17th August, the Revolutionary Tribunal was created; Citizen Réal was appointed Public Accuser, and left our committee" (the *comité de surveillance*, at the Hôtel de Ville). "He had been one of our most active members, and the rest of the committee soon felt the weight of their duties. It was at this time that Marat made his way into it. He was supported by Robespierre, who was supreme at the Hôtel de Ville, and also by the mob who imposed him on us; not by Panis, as Louvet afterwards said in his speech addressed to Robespierre, Louvet was mistaken, it was Robespierre who defended Marat against Pétion at the commune, and prevented Panis and me from speaking. Marat profited by the inexperience of the new administrators to exercise a dictature which I may term insolent, for he turned two members out of the committee.

"The confidence which the heads of the departments and the public placed in me, joined to the entire charge which I had of the National Guard, excited Marat's jealousy, and made him fear lest I should dispute his supremacy. His vanity, likewise, was hurt because I did not receive him with enthusiasm. He suggested doubts of my patriotism in the minds of Panis and our new colleagues, threw suspicion on my connection with Pétion, who had regretted his taking the lead in the committee,[1] and accused me of criminal relations with Brissot (perhaps

[1] After the 10th August Pétion became more and more attached to the Gironde.

he was influenced by Robespierre, who, as I have already said, did not like me); he even ordered without any cause my arrest in the first days of September. I owed my escape to Panis, Duplain, and Desforgues. He then pasted placards all over the walls of Paris, in which he ordered the electors not to nominate me, because I had, he said, betrayed the cause of the people on the 10th of August! On the day of my election he caused me to be accused from the tribune of having ordered the massacre of the battalion of St. Marcel. This abominable calumny was repudiated by the chiefs of that battalion, and although Robespierre did not put me on his list I was elected a member of the National Convention.[1]

"Marat reorganized the committee, and while my old duties were left to me in the police, I was not a member of the sub-committees which were charged with the arrest and examination of prisoners. I regret this only because I might have joined with those of my new colleagues who were of my way of thinking in opposing his despotism."

The first condemnation under the new tribunal was that of D'Angremont;[2] he was executed on the 20th by torchlight, and was the first victim of the guillotine now erected for the first time in the Place de Grêve in front of the Hôtel de Ville. He was followed on the 21st by Laporte, Intendant of the Civil List, and Durosay, the editor of the *Gazette de Paris*.

[1] The twenty-four members for Paris were elected on September 2nd; but the Convention did not meet till September 21st.

[2] For the *Bande d'Angremont*, see p. 186.

On the 26th there was a grand funeral *fête*, in honour of the victims of the "Massacre de St. Laurent," as the insurrection of the 10th was now called. These victims were not those who perished in defence of the Château and the king, but those among the insurgents who were killed in the onslaught. It is very curious that although the Jacobins gloried in being the assailants on that day, they considered themselves as victims, because for a short time the inhabitants of the Tuileries defended themselves.

Sergent, whose artistic powers rendered him very useful to his party, was desired to organize this ceremonial. A huge Egyptian mausoleum was erected to receive the remains of the so-called patriots. Over the door was written this fine sentence composed by Sergent—"*Silence! ils reposent!*"

"The public" (Sergent quotes from Prudhomme) "did not appreciate this *fête*. The place chosen for its celebration gave it a sombre character. The pyramid was opposite to the Palace, to those windows which on the 10th had vomited death on the patriots, and covered the space beneath with corpses. In the midst of the procession a man on horseback carried a banner on which was written—

"'To the manes of the Citizens of France who died in defence of Liberty.'"

It is difficult to appreciate the liberty which institutes domiciliary visits and fills the prisons.

[1] "The Assembly, at the suggestion of Danton, passed a decree ordering a series of domiciliary visits, which were executed by the agents of the Insurrectional Committee. These visits were carried out with

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847.

so much promptitude and vigour that a number of persons bearing false names and passports were arrested who were evidently accomplices of the Court. In each district private denunciations were received, and the accused sent to prison by order of the Municipality. The prisons were therefore full of persons who if not guilty were at least suspected. Many of them, if they had been tried by ordinary tribunals, would doubtless have regained not only their liberty, but the esteem of the public. Prisoners were often sent by the different committees without the authority of the police. M. Sergent knew nothing about them until his regular visits to the prisons, when the registers were given to him by the warders."

It is well to know what these prisons were to which so many innocent people were committed.

[1] "At the Conciergerie, there are, under an exceedingly low roof, two cells, four feet below the ground, into which no light ever penetrates except from the reflection of the pavement. At whatever hour of the day the official has to enter it he is preceded by two turnkeys each bearing a thick candle, whose trembling and feeble rays penetrate an atmosphere of death. (In 1791 a commissioner of police died in consequence of frequently visiting these cells.) He is not allowed to go further till he has inhaled vinegar and salts, and a little fresh air has been ad-

[1] Memoir written in 1801. Madame Roland and Marie Antoinette were confined in the Conciergerie.

mitted through the door. The yellow and swollen faces, hands, and feet, the pale and sunken eyes of the prisoners in these cells inspire a horror magnified by their barbarous names, for the one cell is called 'The Royal,' and the other 'Fine air.' The official visit was a blessing to the unhappy occupiers, who left the cells for only an hour in the day, as during the visit the door was left open. By the porter's lodge is a cell called the 'Mousetrap,' in which are confined prisoners who are waiting till their case is inscribed in the calendar. This dark cellar has no opening to the fresh air. The wretches, who are left here for days together, long impatiently for their dinner, which is passed to them through a grating, to which they come to breathe a different air. They try to prolong the time as much as possible, even by disputing with the rude or drunken turnkey, who is anxious to shut the grating so as to shorten this period of alleviation as much as possible. Above another horrible cell is written, 'Letter-box for the town.' This name was at every moment the subject for coarse and brutal jests on the part of the gendarmes or other officials in charge of the prisoners; everything seemed to be arranged to excite the most cutting irony.

"For eight months Panis and I had never ceased soliciting the department, which alone could order the expenditure, while we could only make suggestions, to suppress these infectious cells. We excited the compassion of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld who

presided over it, and was much more occupied with philanthropy than conspiracies—he would not have perished if he had remained in Paris. Our reports had no material results. We included in it a description of the other prisons, among them that of the Abbaye, for which I asked a portion of the garden behind it for exercise. No prisoner ever left his cell in the Abbaye except to go into another.

"Soon after the 10th August there were about sixty persons brought to a court in the Mairie from every direction, who had nothing but straw to lie upon. One of them sent for me, and all complained to me of their condition. The only food they had was a little bread, and even this was difficult to obtain in the midst of the confusion which naturally reigned all round them. I ordered the porter of the Mairie to send for beds, chairs, and tables, from the Tuileries, and I authorized a neighbouring *restaurateur* to send them food at a fixed price.

"While I was busy with the *fête* of the 26th, all the police regulations had been changed, the numbers of the secret police were increased to sixteen, new administrators were already established, so that I found myself on my return almost a stranger in a place where, fifteen days before, I had been consulted about everything. I had no longer either authority or influence. Citizen Loyer, who was a municipal officer, and a man of great respectability, had a relation who was a priest and was arrested and brought to the Mairie. Loyer asked me to set him

free. I wrote myself the official order for his discharge, and had it signed by several of my colleagues; two more were wanting, and I desired Loyer to find them. I know not what ill-luck pursued him; he was not able to get the release, and the priest perished in prison because I could not persuade the new administrators to ratify an order which they had not examined.

"Some prisoners were confined *au secret* by order of the Committee of the Assembly, others by that of the General Council. Of the latter were M. de Sombreuil, and M. d'Affry, the colonel of the Swiss Guards. Mademoiselle de Sombreuil in vain entreated the Committee of the Assembly and the General Council to permit her to visit her father in the Abbaye, and to give him the comforts he required, for he was ill. She was also refused at the Committee of the Mairie, which was forbidden to give orders to see prisoners who were *au secret* (this is still the rule). She was weeping in our office. Touched by her devotion, I proposed to her the only means in my power for reuniting her to her father, which was that she should remain with him until he was no longer *au secret*. She accepted with gladness. Panis, whom I consulted, approved highly of this method of satisfying her affectionate assiduity, and she left us with an order from me in which I stated that, as she was not a prisoner, every possible attention was to be shown her, and no one was to be allowed to be wanting in deference to her. The generous girl owed

to this order the happiness of saving her father from the death which would infallibly have otherwise been his destiny.[1]

"Colonel d'Affry was also *au secret*, and was ill; the wife of the warden of the Abbaye was too busy to nurse him. I saw him, and gave him an order to allow his servant to join him on the same conditions as those to which Mademoiselle de Sombreuil had agreed. I wrote these orders with my own hand, and on my sole responsibility.

"The Section of St. Roch arrested and sent to the Mairie one hundred persons, escorted by a numerous guard. The official statement was brought to me, and before the day was over I set sixty of them at liberty; fifteen remained in the office, waiting for their friends to reclaim them; the rest had been seized without papers in hotels and private houses. A Madame de la Rochefoucauld and her maid were arrested on their way to St. Germains, without a passport. One of her nephews came several times to our office to ask for their deliverance; at length he came to me, and I immediately gave him the order, and took it myself, as the official messengers were otherwise employed. Eight of the Swiss Guard who were taken to the Abbaye on the 10th were retained by the Citizen Ebingre, who addressed himself to me. I set them at liberty on the spot.

[1] Sergent disbelieves the ghastly story of Mademoiselle de Sombreuil drinking a bowl of aristocratic blood, to save her father, on the 2nd of September. He was guillotined later on.

"Olympe de Gouges, who sought celebrity and found death, was arrested for sundry writings and placards. She appealed from Pétion to me, and I set her free. Afterwards she had sufficient confidence in me to ask me to defend her, although she had offered herself to the convention as the advocate of Louis XVI. I did not consider that I had sufficient talent as an orator to save her life; I suggested other more distinguished advocates. She was condemned.

"Two officers who were decorated with the order of St. Louis, were brought to the Mairie, and I was ordered to interrogate them. Finding no accusation against them, I set them at liberty.

[1] "A celebrated member of the Constituent Assembly, Marquis Lally Tollendal, who had emigrated after the 6th October, 1789, was arrested and taken to the Hôtel du Ville, where there were many other prisoners, and brought before M. Sergent, who was obliged to send him to the prison of the Abbaye.

"Buob, *Juge de Paix* of the Section St. Roch, was declared a conspirator, and condemned; the accusation was well founded, for it was through him that the Court paid a secret legion, which was to fall upon us at a given signal. Anisson Duperron, *Juge de Paix* of the Section Mauconseil, and another, were also arrested. Picquet was on the point of being arrested for similar reasons; he had really been in communication with M. Terrier, the Minister of the Interior,

[1] From the Memoir dictated in 1847.

in some matters regarding the police. M. Sergent, who knew him well, saved him from imprisonment by giving him a private hint of these domiciliary visits, and, in consequence, he left Paris at once.

[1] "In the Conciergerie were men who had been cited before the criminal tribunals—men under sentence of death. This prison was full before the 10th of August, and the Committee of General Safety sent no one there; nor to the Châtelet, which was filled by prisoners of the worst and vilest kind.

"At the time of the massacres the Abbaye contained one hundred and eighty-seven prisoners; of these seventy-five were soldiers, some Swiss, others the king's body-guard, disbanded on the 20th by order of the committee, about forty forgers of false *assignats* and other paper money—in short, there were only fifty-seven committals on the part of the committee to which I belonged.

"At La Force there were two hundred prisoners before the 10th of August—cheats, forgers, debtors, &c. It was to this prison, which was large and well-ordered, that the committee sent some of those it arrested.

"The last is St. Pélagie. This prison was tolerably comfortable, very healthy; at its head was a kind, honest governor. It was to this prison that the committee sent most of those it arrested.

"None of the priests confined in the *Carmes* were sent thither by the committee; in fact the committee

[1] From the Memoir written in 1801.

arrested no priest for refusing the oath to the Constitution; those who were imprisoned by our orders were accused of being agents of the royal conspiracy, and were sent to the prisons I have mentioned.

"We had no authority over Bicêtre, and no prisoners were sent thither who had not been already sentenced.

"To recapitulate: there were at that time only five prisons in Paris, in which during two months there were only 1630 prisoners, and from the official returns it appears that the committee had signed only 341 warrants. From the same returns it appears that there were only 64 signed by me, and I set at liberty nearly 100 persons. These recollections still comfort my heart, and if any of those prisoners who escaped death were asked, there would not be one who would not speak of me with gratitude. I have seen some who were condemned to death, who were waiting for the fatal hour, bathing my hands with tears of thankfulness for the alleviations which had formerly been refused to them. What becomes then of the calumny that I heaped victims in the prisons? When I visited a prison, after hearing whether there had been any disturbance of order, I made the warders retire, and I asked the prisoners if they had any complaint to make. I never left the house without having at once attended to their complaints, without tasting the bread and other food, and inspecting the beds, without filling my pockets with papers and letters for their lawyers, their judges, and even for their relations. This was a great kindness to them, for even at this

day (1801) it is well known that in one prison, if a son wishes to send a letter to comfort his mother, he has to pay 18 francs for so doing.

"An anonymous writer printed in the year 1797 in the *Publiciste*, that he *saw me* on the 26th August coolly signing orders for filling the prisons; if he wanted to tell a lie he might have been more skilful. The funeral *fête* took place on the 26th. It began at noon, and finished at ten in the evening. I was the whole day on horseback, directing the arrangements, &c. &c. It may be presumed that after such a day I required rest. On the following days I had to inspect and sign all the bills of the tradesmen employed—an occupation sufficiently absorbing, for none could be paid without my formal verification. After this how much value can be attached to an ocular witness? In fact the anonymous correspondent wrote his letter five years afterwards.

"Pelletier, the author of some *Memoirs of the Revolution*, published in London, goes even farther—'Sergent,' he says—and he also says he *saw*—'was signing without emotion the committal to prison of a man who in vain had tried to excite his compassion. This unhappy man trod unintentionally on the paw of a dog that was under the table, and which howled. "Be careful," cried Sergent, indignantly, "you have hurt my dog."' This anecdote is well imagined; the only misfortune is that I had no dog. 'Ita non gladio, verum eticem stile putavit impune sibi quo liberet facile.'

"The domiciliary visits were ordered by the Legislative Assembly, the Committee of the Sections, the Commissioners of Police, the municipal officers, the magistrates, the Committee of Public Safety of the Legislative Assembly, the Municipalities outside the walls: so many authorities could not fail to ascertain that they were thoroughly carried out, and so indeed they were. All these authorities arrested, threw into prison, accused, and vied with each other in the exercise of their powers; each was so jealous of the other that each ordered all the prisoners to be brought before its own tribunal."

During the interval between the 10th of August and the 2nd of September, while all these arrests were taking place, Sergent says that the administration of the police was being rapidly disorganized.

[1] "We saw our committee filled with guards, with prisoners, with commissioners; our subordinates often endeavoured in vain to penetrate through the crowd in order to present their report. Our new colleagues (they were increased to sixteen) knew nothing of the details. Citizen Réal proposed that the whole administration should be put into the hands of Panis and Sergent, while the rest occupied themselves only with the consequences of the insurrection. I accepted with the more pleasure that I was attached to my duties, and that I saw the discipline of the police going entirely to pieces.

"It was at this time that M. Vatrin, the jailer of

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

the Châtelet, was robbed on leaving the Treasury, where he had just received 1000 or 1200 francs for the expenses of his prison. He believed that his pocket-book had been taken from him in the arcades of the Palais Royal. This excellent man, who was a real philanthropist, and beloved by all his prisoners (who were all of them annoyed by this loss, which he would have to repair), was sad and out of spirits. The prisoners wanted to know why. He told them. I happened to be with him paying my daily visit, which was not wanted, for where he governed order always reigned, he acquitted himself so honourably of his duties. 'Never mind, have patience, it will be restored to you,' said a wretch, who was charged with several murders; 'there is not in Paris one *good prisoner*' (this is the name they give to those who make prison their home, they go in and out as if it were an hotel) 'who knowing that the pocket-book was yours would dare to keep it from you. What does it contain?' '*Assignats* of different value and some papers, &c.,' was the reply.

"Three days afterwards I went to inquire about this pocket-book. We went again into the Court (it is the only one, and very small), in which nearly two hundred prisoners were taking exercise and recreation. The same man got up on a stone bench, and cried out, 'How many pints of wine will you give for this red morocco pocketbook?' and he held it aloft. 'As many as you want,' said the turnkey, laughingly. 'Examine it; there is nothing missing; you will find the *assignats*

and papers.' Cheers resounded through the court, and pealed through the prisoners' windows. I gave them an extra hour of exercise for two days as a reward.

"We now reach the 2nd September, that day which was afterwards the source of so much bitterness to me, and of so many calumnies. The cowards who were not able to kill me distilled the venom of their wickedness over my whole life."

Every member of the commune knew that some terrible blow was impending. Danton proclaimed as much in his celebrated speech, which ended '*de l'audace, de l'audace et toujours de l'audace*'; and also when he told the Duc de Chartres to go back to the army and keep quiet, and not to criticize the doings of the Government, for it was necessary to put a river of blood between the Republic and its opponents.

On the night of the 30th August, all the barriers of Paris were closed and strictly guarded; three thousand persons are said to have been arrested and crowded into the prisons. On Sunday news came of the surrender of Longwy. A mad panic that the Royalists were in league with the Prussians spread through the town, and a mob of ruffians began at three o'clock a general massacre of the prisoners, which continued for four days.

[1] "On the 1st of September all was quiet in Paris. The Place de Grêve was full of idle people looking at a man fastened to the pillory. This wretch was diverting himself by grossly insulting the spectators. He went further; he vomited curses on the nation, the Revolution, and especially against the Parisians, whom he threatened with the approaching vengeance

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

of the Royalists. The crowd, irritated past bearing, pressed upon the scaffold, and were about to murder the imprudent exciter of their anger, when ten of the members of the municipal council appeared to quell the disturbance. Manuel, at the head of a troop of the National Guard, succeeded in tearing the victim from the hands of the mob. Manuel decided that the criminal should be judged by those whom he had insulted. A tribunal, appointed by a magistrate who had no legal right and cared only for popularity, was extemporized in one of the rooms of the Hôtel de Ville. The witnesses were his accusers; he had no defenders. He was sentenced unceremoniously to death, and hung on the famous Lanterne. The threats of this man, whose sad fate I have described, were not without foundation; they were the echoes of a rumour circulating among the prisoners, caused no doubt by the news of the military disasters. On the same day there were disturbances in the prisons. The warder of the Châtelet, Vatrin, came to tell me —'This morning a great noise in the yard made me open my window. Imagine my surprise at seeing more than two hundred prisoners carrying their bundles under their arms or on their backs. They cried, "Good-bye, master; to-day we are to be set free. Let us go, if you are not inclined to wait till we are delivered."' Vatrin had the courage to go down, and as he had succeeded in winning the affection of his prisoners, he was able to persuade them to return to their rooms. I heard that a

similar scene had taken place at Bicêtre, and that force had to be used to quell the mutiny."

The news of these occurrences spread all over the town. It was as usual rumoured that a second St. Bartholomew was meditated by the Royalists. The people were exasperated, and the Council-General of the commune published the following proclamation—

[1] "'Citizens, the enemy is at the gates of Paris. Verdun, the only obstacle, cannot hold out more than eight days. All the citizens who are defending the fortress have sworn to die rather than surrender; if they make their bodies your defence, it is your duty to fly to their assistance. Citizens, let all the friends of liberty enlist under the banners this very day. Let us meet at the Champ-de-Mars; let an army of sixty thousand men be raised without delay, and let us march against the enemy, either to fall beneath his blows, or to exterminate him with ours!' Danton, the Minister of Justice, harangued the people in the Champ-de Mars, in the most vehement accents. 'To arms!' he cried, and the crowd responded, the cannon on the Pont Neuf sounded an alarm, and the drum was beaten in every section. The Fédérés from Marseilles and Brest swarmed in the streets, calling the citizens to the frontier. It was at this moment that the cry arose among the recruits—'There are other Prussians within our walls. When we are gone the prisons will be opened, and they will murder our defenceless wives and children. No

[1] From M. Noël Parfait's Memoir.

quarter for our enemies! To arms, citizens! to arms!' "

It is very extraordinary that knowing all this Sergent should have abandoned his post.

[1] "On the morning of the 2nd September I left the care of my department to the committee, that I might go into the country with two friends for a little recreation after my labours. As I was escorting home these ladies, who lived in the direction of the Odéon, I was stopped by two men, who said, 'You seem very easy, you cannot know what is going on; they are massacring the prisoners in the Abbaye.' I was told that during my absence the deputies had implored vainly in favour of the victims, that the Maire had done all he could, but the National Guard refused to act, and he had no power. On entering the court of the Mairie, about six o'clock, I saw the guard making extraordinary efforts to protect two men, who were surrounded by a crowd of both sexes. At first I thought they were being arrested, and as I have always been revolted by the cruelty with which prisoners are treated, I threw myself before these two men to protect them, and I gave my name. The cries on all sides showed me that the crowd was endeavouring to tear them away to murder them. The men themselves, in their bewilderment and agony, took me for one of their murderers. I contrived to push one into the guard-house; meanwhile the other was being dragged to the foot of the grand

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

staircase. They were illtreating him, and accusing him of insulting the nation. Two strong men seized him by the hair and began to massacre him, when I threw myself between them, and pretending that it was necessary for me to examine him before I gave him back to them, I delivered him and took him to the round house while waiting for a reinforcement of guards which I had sent for to the Port Neuf. I cannot describe the efforts I made on the way, or how many times he was torn from me, how often I caught him again, and how often I was buffetted and threatened. At length the guard arrived. I then became powerful. I dispersed the crowd without having been able to arrest any one, for the officers on guard told me that every one of them, men and women, had wanted to hang the victims. Night came on, and after giving all the help which they needed to the two unfortunate men, after receiving their embraces I led them out through the Lamoignon court by a door which is never used. I then learned that Longwy had been taken. I was told that six carriages escorted by gendarmes and Fédérés, filled with priests, were stopped at the barriers. They were being taken to the Abbaye; it was said, but I do not know if it was true, that they had insulted the populace. They did not reach the Abbaye; they were massacred at the gate. The Fédérés took possession of the prisons, and proceeded to execute what they called the 'vengeance of the people.' The National Guard refused to assemble,

the gendarmerie joined the Fédérés, and assisted in the executions to the end. Six commissioners sent by the Assembly to the prisons were obliged to leave in order to save their lives. All the authorities acted separately. Pétion ran between the prison of La Force and the Assembly. Billaud Varennes was at the Abbaye, and Manuel at the Carmes.[1] He was a known enemy of the priests, and could do nothing to save them. The general council, consisting of new men, was presided over by a young painter, a scholar of David, bad as an artist, and worse as an administrator. It was pitiable. I can affirm that the *Comité de surveillance* gave no orders as to the massacres, and that Danton did not appear in it in the first days of September. All I can say of him is that when afterwards some one reproached him in my hearing with having provoked these murders, he replied, 'I think with you, that such things are distressing, and would take us back to the barbarism of the middle ages; but this one has perhaps spared us from greater calamities, for it effected the flight of the King of Prussia and his army.'

"From the Mairie I went to Emira to relieve her anxiety and to prevent her hearing all the details. She was with a friend, the wife of one of the Judges in the Court of Chancery, who lived in the Rue Condé, and had just heard that all the priests in the Carmes had been murdered. She rejected this

[1] Santerre, the Commandant of the National Guard, was sitting quietly on the box of Madame de Stael's carriage.

horrible story as an invention. This lady had just come back (it was eight p.m.) from the Gardens of the Luxembourg with her children and nurse, and had spent the evening there. A great many people were there; she had seen and heard nothing of these events.

"I returned to the Mairie, and at once went to Pétion's room. I found with him his wife, Brissot, and Mendouze, who were in consternation. I told them what had taken place in the court a few hours previously, and they told me what they knew of the events of the day and evening. I left them about one o'clock, when I went to the committee, where I found the same consternation.

"The arrests were still going on, and prisoners were being continually brought in. The Abbé D'Antichamp was brought by the commissioners of the Lombard section. He knew all that was going on, and was already in a fever. He owned that he might be considered a 'suspect' as his brother commanded the Prussian army; he felt that his name was his death-warrant. We reassured him without having, however, any more reason for composure than he had, for we dared not keep him at the Mairie, where we feared that at any moment the assassins might come to murder the prisoners they found there. I proposed (and this plan was approved by my colleagues, and comforted him a little) to give him in charge to the Citizen Ozanne, an usher of the tribunal which had given the warrant for his arrest, to keep him in his

house till the papers found on the abbé and the warrant had been examined. But terror had taken possession of D'Antichamp; he would not move; he rejected with horror the idea of stepping into a carriage. I took him by one arm, Ozanne by the other, and followed by the other two commissioners we all five walked out together as if we were going quietly home. I took him in this way to the Pont Neuf, until he felt more confidence in the asylum he was going to. He stayed for some time with Citizen Ozanne; he was ill, and was treated with the kindest hospitality, and as soon as he recovered he went away.

"He afterwards perished on the scaffold.

"I then went back to the committee, where a messenger from Lavaquerie, the warder of the Abbaye, was waiting for me with a note to tell me that he had managed to effect the escape of the Marquis de Lally Tollendal over the wall of the garden of the Abbaye, and I also heard of the deliverance of M. de Sombreuil, saved by the heroism of his daughter. At three in the morning I was at the council; it was still sitting. We had scarcely any official reports of what was going on. Our police agents, sent one after the other, and detained by the people, had not re-appeared; the connection with the Mairie was suspended, and there was everywhere confusion and anxiety. Vatrin, the respectable warder of the Châtelet, came to tell us, 'Gentlemen, I have no longer any prisoners to look after, there are none but dead bodies in the prison.' Seeing our horror, he added,

'Do not be so disturbed. I had no political prisoners, they were all criminals; most of them had been committed before, the people set free about twenty of the least guilty. I looked in at the Conciergerie as I passed; the massacres are still going on there. What is to be done? I am waiting for orders.'"

It is remarkable that instead of ordering them to be stopped, Sergent replied—

"We must first recommend the commune to have the dead bodies removed, and every trace of the massacre effaced, for blood calls for blood, and unless the prisons are cleared at once we shall deliver to death all who are sent there."

Before the 10th August, Sergent boasted of having let in the Bretons and Marseillais, and lodged them close to the Tuileries. Now he says—

"The first authors of these massacres were the Southerners and the Bretons, who had been present at the *fête* of the Federation, and had assailed the Tuileries on the 10th of August, and who when they were leaving Paris for the frontier, said, 'We have got rid for you of your enemies at home who corresponded with those against whom we are going to fight, and who after our departure would have murdered you and your children.' The next thing heard was that a certain Maillard, the usher of one of the tribunals of Paris, who had already on October 6, 1789, led the women to Versailles with guns and an armed force to ask for bread, and brought the king back in triumph to Paris—it was this man who constituted himself

president of the tribunal set up in the prisons. And what a tribunal! Good God!

"The gendarmes, who had joined the Fédérés from the first, ventured to ask the Minister Roland for their wages. He sent them to the commune. I was alone with the exception of Marat, waiting for the other members of the committee. They applied to me, presenting a certificate signed 'Maillard.' I sent them off with indignation, saying, 'What! you soldiers who are paid to enforce the law have the audacity to ask a magistrate to pay you for the massacres of which you are guilty. Begone at once.' Marat echoed the words. Was he sincere?"

Sergent thinks that his order for paying for washing out the bloodstains was interpreted as an order for paying the assassins.

This tribunal of Maillard consisted of twelve men, alternately judges and executioners. In the register of the Abbaye, which still exists among the archives, the pages are stained by bloody fingers. When a prisoner was brought before them, if he was judged guilty (and there were very few who escaped this sentence), the president said "*à la Force*," and he was dispatched on leaving the room. Maillard went from prison to prison.

One of the most illustrious victims was the beautiful and virtuous Princess de Lamballe. Her head was set on a pike and paraded before the windows of the queen at the Temple, and afterwards in front of those of her brother-in-law, the Duc d'Orleans, at the Palais Royal. It is said that he bore the sight with equanimity.

It is not necessary to soil these pages with any further details of these horrible massacres, which were

carried into effect with the most revolting cruelty. Sergent recurs anxiously to the instances of his own clemency.

[1] "On the morning of the 3rd September, a young medical student met me in the Rue des Cordeliers and asked for a private interview at my house in the Rue des Poitevins. He told me that on the day before as he was passing the Luxembourg about ten in the evening a man fell into his arms, crying, 'Save me!' The man seemed quite wild and lost; and was covered with blood. He was a priest. He dragged him to his room in the Rue Hautefeuille, and by giving him all the assistance in his power restored him to reason. This priest told him that he had escaped seven times by a marvellous chance from certain death; that when he met him he had just been turned out of a house in which he had taken refuge by leaping from the Carmes into a court; he had hurt himself. 'What am I to do with him?' asked the young man. 'I tell you this in confidence, although I do not know you. Shall I not lose my own life by attempting to save his?' 'What you ought to do?' I rejoined. 'You should rejoice at having saved the life of this man, whoever he may be; you should keep him with you and cure him if you can afford it; if not come to me and I will pay your expenses.' 'But supposing the domiciliary visits should begin again?' 'I see what your fears are, and I will dispel them.' I immediately gave him an order in writing, stating

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

that he was to keep the priest who was sent to him to be cured and was to be given up only to me. In case any commissioners, members of the police, or section, or others, should come to arrest and carry off the priest, he was to insist upon my presence, and forbid any one to take any step without my intervention. 'Will you be easy now?' I said. 'Take care of your guest, and when he is able to go away burn this order, and take him to the place he thinks safest.' The young man left me quite satisfied with himself and me, and he had reason to be so.

"The Legislative Assembly decreed that every priest who refused to take the oath should leave France.[1] On the 3rd or 4th, D'Ivernois, who lived with Citizen Luneau de Boisjermain, a well known and much esteemed literary man, with whom I was slightly acquainted, brought to me a gentleman who wanted to ask a favour of me. 'Under this costume,' he said, 'you see a priest, a canon, a grand vicar, who will not take an oath against his conscience. I am assured that I may open my whole mind to you, and I am going to do so. There are six of us who have had the happiness to escape a terrible fate, but can we flatter ourselves that our good fortune will continue? What shall we do? Is there not a law which permits us to leave the kingdom? Our prelate and we, who are his followers, are determined to obey it.' 'Yes, you have the power, even the order so to do.' 'But how shall we get passports? Shall we not

[1] They were, however, stopped if they attempted to do so.

be arrested?' 'I cannot answer for anything in that matter; it depends on so many circumstances, so many people.' 'Well then, we will ask you to procure them for us?—is this possible? We want five for ourselves, and one for Monseigneur.' 'Stop a minute. As a magistrate, I have drawn a warrant for the criminal tribunal to be served on a bishop who is concealed in Paris, and for whom I have been looking for the last month; if he should be the same person in whose favour you are speaking, do not name him, do not tell me where he is, as you would force me either to fail in my duty, or to appear to make use of your confidence to betray you. If it is he I cannot do what you ask (Madame d'Ivernois and M. Luneau, to whom this conversation was reported, will bear witness as to what I said). One word before you proceed farther. Is there any criminal prosecution against your bishop at this moment?' 'No, no; I admire your generosity, and your good faith. You have entirely gained my confidence, and you may depend upon my esteem, and that of the Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, for the rest of your life. It is for him that I ask you to interest yourself; there are five of us ready to share his fate.'

"I promised the passports; I obtained them in two days from the General Council, and the priests went to England.

"Many will not fail to say (for too many have given rise to such suspicions during the Revolution, and those unfortunately are not the same as are now

persecuted) that the priests had a great sum to pay for this favour. Six passports, one for a cardinal, just after the massacre of the priests, must have cost a great deal of money. Again I call to witness Madame d'Ivernois and Citizen Luneau, or any of these priests if they have come back, that I began by warning them against any sort of offer or present; that all I earned by this was the promise of a similar service should circumstances change, as they flattered themselves they would. The cardinal told me that he had given orders for me to take refuge in his hotel when the Royal and the Prussian armies arrived. (I have had to wait a long time.) This was *my* reward. The municipal officer who helped me in this affair, and who had been in easy circumstances before the Revolution, is now living in poverty with his family; his only consolations are hard work and a quiet conscience. This was *his* recompense.

[1] "Before leaving the Committee, on the morning of the 3rd, Sergent observed to his colleagues, 'that the terrible events of which Paris was the theatre would soon be known all over France; that the papers, from ignorance or malice, would carry the news to the provinces and foreign countries in terms calumniating the friends of the Revolution, who would be considered as wild beasts; and that it was essential that some official communication should be made at once. I proposed to address a proclamation to the municipalities, with a faithful account of the massacres

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847.

and their causes. My proposal was unanimously approved, and several members began to write a circular address of the kind I advised. I recommended truth, elevation, and no exaggeration; and as I had important business connected with the police, I went to work in the room in the Mairie in which I slept on urgent occasions. In the morning I took a few hours' rest. After I left the committee Marat justly remarked that there was no time to send the address to the municipal press. He carried it home with him, and had it printed by the press of his newspaper, the *Ami du Peuple*. This was easy, for he had taken away three presses from the *Imprimerie Nationale* on the 10th August. In the evening of the 3rd he took eighty-three packets, all ready to be dispatched, to Danton, who sent them off to the departments."

Sergent never saw this circular. He says that the first time he heard it was when it was read by Vergniaud at the Convention on 25th September.

[1] "I was surprised to find that it was an apology for the massacres which were recommended as a measure of public safety. I protested that I had not signed this circular, although my name was appended to it, and that I heard it now for the first time. These were its terms—'The Commune of Paris hastens to inform her brethren of all the departments that a part of the ferocious conspirators who are detained in the prisons have been put to death by the people—an

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

act of justice which appeared indispensable in order to restrain by terror the legions of traitors shut up within the walls at the moment when the people are going to march on the enemy; and without doubt the nation, after the long series of treasons which have conducted it to the brink of an abyss, will be eager to adopt these useful and salutary measures, and all the French will say, like the Parisians—"We march against the enemy, and we do not leave behind us brigands to murder our wives and children."' This circular was signed by 'Duplain, Panis, Sergent, Lenfant, Jourdan, Marat, Deforgues, Leclèrc, Duffort, Colly, *appointed by the Commune, and sitting at the Mairie.*'

"When Duplain and I," continues Sergent, "reproached Marat for making use of our names without our knowledge, he replied by showing us on the books of the Council a decree registered by Panis, Viguier, Perron, and me, purporting that every paper issuing from the administration of the police should be published in the names of all four administrators, although only one had actually signed it."

This circular had the desired effect on the 4th September. The prisoners from Orleans were stopped at Versailles, and there butchered by the impatient populace, assisted by some of the assassins from Paris; and on the same day the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, who had been a philanthropist from his earliest years, and was loved and respected by all parties, was arrested by order of the commune at Gisors. He was leaving his house, escorted by the commissioners from Paris, and surrounded by municipal and military officers,

twelve gendarmes, and one hundred National Guards, when a troop of volunteers fell upon him, dragged him from the midst of his escort, and murdered him before the eyes of his mother and wife, who were following in a carriage, and were saved with difficulty from the assassins.

Sergent never got over the impression made by the horrible scenes in the prisons. Quinet says that to the end of his life he trembled and turned pale whenever any allusion was made to them,[1] and in the MS. there are pages on pages of indignant repudiation of having had any share in them. Yet on the 6th September, in a speech delivered from the tribune of the Conseil-Général,[2] "M. Sergent described the odious means which were employed for calumniating the people. He pictures their kindness, generosity, and justice, even in the midst of their most terrible vengeance; he complains of the atrocious reports that have been circulated of the pillage of shops and of the rich; he dilates with complacency on the proofs the people have so often given of respect for property; he lays down the true principle which has had such happy consequences in politics, that to make a man virtuous you must appear to believe in his virtue. In conclusion, he moved that the Council should determine on an address to the people, expressed in such terms as to make them sensible of their virtue, and fear to tarnish it." He was invited to write the address himself.

Next to the accusation of having participated in

[1] See Quinet's *La Révolution*, vol. i. p. 381.
[2] Reported in the *procès verbaux de la Commune.*

the massacres of September, Sergent felt most bitterly the charge of rapacity brought against him by Thiers and other historians.

[1] "In consequence of the massacres in the prisons, a *dépôt* was established at the Mairie for the jewels and valuables belonging to the victims; for it is worthy of notice that the fanatics who murdered did not rob, and this may be considered as some extenuation in their favour. A Swiss refugee, called Clavel, who was under the protection of M. Sergent, and thoroughly trusted by him, took possession, in the name of the police, of all the jewels, and carried them to the committee of the Mairie. For a long time he waited in vain for the relations and friends of the victims to claim the watches, rings, snuff-boxes, &c. It is probable that the fear of being included among the suspects, and incurring the same dangers, induced them to hide and keep silent.

"The police was so destitute of funds that M. Sergent was obliged to take out of his pocket-book an *assignat* of two hundred francs to pay several hackney-carriages which had brought prisoners to the court of the Mairie. The treasurer and secretary told him that they were in the greatest possible embarrassment. The members of the committee were therefore obliged to devise some means of paying the absolutely necessary expenses. Some of them proposed to sell the jewels which had not been claimed. This plan

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847. He mentions the subject over and over again in his other papers.

was adopted and executed. A well-known jeweller of the Quai de Morfondre, and a clockmaker of the Rue Dauphine, were sent for to value these objects. M. Sergent was not present, nor did he hear of the proceeding until told of it by one of his agents who had bought a watch. He complained that the sale had not been public. However, as it was not so, and it was still going on, he bought for himself a gold ring, of little value in itself, but the stone was a cameo, representing a head of Bacchus in three colours. It was a modern work of art, and signed and valued as that of a Parisian called Marchand, who lived in London—an engraver on precious stones who enjoyed a high reputation (the celebrated English engraver, Pickler, was also living at this time). It was valued at not more than forty or forty-eight francs; one frequently sees objects of this sort in Italy worth twenty-four or thirty francs. Some time afterwards a *Rolandist* reaction attacked these sales, which were termed mysterious. A report was drawn up by Cavaignac, a member of the Grand Council of the commune; its conclusions were affirmed, the sales were annulled, and the members of the committee ordered to restore all these objects. M. Sergent (and perhaps he was the only person who did so) scrupulously returned the ring to M. Clavières, the Finance Minister, asking him at the same time to repurchase the ring, if it should be sold again, for Sergent, who would like to have it. No such sale took place. Some of the counter-revolutionary royalists

seized this opportunity of nicknaming M. Sergent, in some of the pamphlets they distributed, 'Agathe-Sergent,' and adding to this biting sarcasm that this antique was of *infinite value.* It is quite natural that in moments like these we are describing there should be found cowards who, not daring to fight openly, shelter themselves behind calumny to throw missiles which, although not fatal, may wound an adversary. It is this choice morsel which M. Thiers picked up, and has transmitted to posterity in his history. We will relate another similar instance. After the celebrated epoch of the 10th August, a stranger carried to Madame Pétion a packet which he had found in a cabinet in the Tuileries, and which he had probably saved from some thief's rapacity. It was a jewel which seemed to have been presented to the queen by the sultan, it was so richly ornamented. It was a sort of aigrette for the hair, large, and of a curious design—a fan enriched with diamonds of different sizes; it was very costly. The packet also contained a pretty cardboard box, filled with several valuable pieces of lace. Madame Pétion did not know what to do with these things, and gave them to M. Sergent, who sent them at once to M. Clavières, the Finance Minister, and a friend of Pétion. When M. Sergent was elected deputy, he saw one day in the newspaper called the *Patriot*, which was edited at that time by Brissot and Carra, an article describing the valuables confided to Madame Pétion, with the addition that no one knew what had become of them.

This roused the indignation of M. Sergent, who in 1789 had caused the election of Brissot by defending him publicly against the calumnies and intrigues of the Court. Sergent met his colleague, Brissot, in the lobby of the Assembly, with his newspaper in his hand, and asked his authority for publishing such an article, adding that if Brissot had asked Madame Pétion, 'your friend's wife, she would have told you that the valuables were in the hands of the Minister of Finance (who is also a friend of yours), and by these means might have stopped your pen, and prevented your attacking me as you have done.' M. Brissot replied, 'A newspaper, you know, is like a public conveyance; every one may sit in it who pays his fare; send a remonstrance to the paper, and it will be inserted.' M. Sergent rejoined quietly, 'Your answer inspires me with so much contempt for you and your paper that I will certainly never write in it,' and turned his back.

"Can this incident have been Brissot's motive for inserting in his *Memoirs* that he had been attached to Sergent as a fellow-citizen till he found that the latter had allowed himself to be seduced by the love of money?"

On the 16th September the Crown diamonds were stolen. Sergent contributed the following curious account of their theft and recovery to the *Revue Rétrospective*—

"When making my daily visits to the prisons in 1792, I was taken on one occasion by the gaoler

Richard (a nominee of my own) to a sort of cell, not, however, unhealthy, at the bottom of a court, in which were confined prisoners under sentence of death. One of these unhappy men, who was expecting the fatal moment, sent for me, as he wanted to ask a favour. He was shivering with fever. What he wanted from me was the permission to be shaved; his beard was very long and very much, he said, in his way. One of the prison regulations which I had found established was opposed to his wish. He entreated me earnestly to grant him this favour. I will repeat his words, for I have never forgotten this extraordinary scene. 'Look, M. l'Administrateur, what a hideous countenance it gives me. When the public sees me going to the scaffold it will say, "He looks like a criminal;" and yet I have never been one, for I have a good heart. I have never done any one any harm. My sole crime is having tampered with the revenue by associating with forgers of false *assignats*. Well! I shall be refused any mercy in my last moments. No one will pity me, because my face will look so revolting. . . . I look like some ferocious assassin. Be so charitable as to have me shaved; I will then arrange my hair more becomingly. My profession was that of a ladies' hairdresser. You see I am not a scoundrel.' I was touched by this entreaty, and I felt the philosophy of his reflections on his disordered appearance, aggravated by the extreme pallor caused by disease and the apprehension of imminent death. I allowed

him to be shaved, but with great precautions. If I had remained in the police administration I should have effaced this prohibition from the rules, for I had already given the model of a chair, the use of which would have been a sufficient protection against the accidents which were feared by allowing the condemned to death to be shaved.

"On the next day I was anxious to see the prisoner. What a moment for him!—for us both! Overpowered by fever, unable to stand, when he saw me he dragged himself from his bed of straw laid upon the ground, to my feet, which he kissed. He was weeping, and raising himself a little he embraced my knees. What feeling in his words!—he was eloquent. His profession had supplied his want of education. I did not again see him in prison. He waited, but without hope, for the result of his appeal to a higher tribunal, which would prolong his existence for three or four days. This was at the end of August. The terrible scenes in the prisons followed.

"Some time after the massacres, a mulatto woman, who came constantly to the tribune of the Jacobin club, came to see me in my office at the police. 'What would you say,' she asked, 'if I enabled you to find the Crown diamonds? I can do so by bringing to you a man who has a secret to tell you. I wanted to take him to the committee of the Legislative Assembly, but he will only make his declaration to you; for he says he is under a great obligation to

you, and it will be an act of gratitude on his part if through him the country owes to you the restoration of the stolen jewels.' 'Bring him at once.' To tell the truth, I had not much confidence in this revelation. I feared some intrigue without, however, having any cause to suspect the good faith of this coloured woman, who was, I knew, an ardent patriot in the women's club. (There was a large club in the same quarter as the Jacobins; it was a long time presided over by Mlle. de Kéralio, who married Robert.)

"An hour afterwards when I was alone in one of the Maire's reception rooms, a man came in dressed in the uniform of a National Guard. The mulatto brought him in, saying, 'This is the man I spoke of.' She then left us. 'M. l'Administrateur,' he began in a low voice, 'I can enable you to recover the Crown diamonds, but you must give me your word that you will not denounce me.' 'What? when you are about to render such an important service?—what can you fear? Do you not rather deserve a reward?' 'I can receive no other than my life. My name cannot appear in this matter with risking its loss.' 'Speak; I promise absolute secrecy.' 'Do you not recognize me, sir?' 'No, I do not think I ever saw you before.' 'Ah! M. l'Administrateur, give me your word of honour as a magistrate that you will not give me up.' 'Why this mystery? If you know anything about this theft, reveal it; were you an accomplice? If so I will protect you——'

"'No, sir, I had nothing to do with it. I am

Lamiévette, the hairdresser, whom you allowed to be shaved at the Conciergerie; you know that I have been condemned to death; the tribunal may arrest me again, although the *popular judges* (the assassins) set me at liberty because I told them that I was imprisoned for having circulated false *assignats.* My sentence had not yet been inscribed, and I was set free.' 'Well, you need not be uneasy. What do you know about the theft of the diamonds?'

"This man was so changed by his dress that I was surprised when he told me his name. After kissing my hand he went on, 'Two new fellow-prisoners of mine were talking in the night of this famous theft; they were talking thieves' slang, which I now understand. I pretended to be asleep. I heard that *all* the diamonds are concealed in two beams in a house in the Rue ——. Send thither as soon as possible; perhaps they have not yet been taken away. But I entreat you not to mention me in your office.'

"He gave me the most exact details, telling me that the thieves (whose names he did not know) did not live in the house. The search took place in accordance with my orders. Everything was found just as he had described. No one in the house had any idea that such riches were deposited in it. No thief was ever found.

"Lamiévette was afraid of staying in Paris. We agreed that no one should know anything about him but Pétion. I got him sent to the army; the Minister of War gave him a commission in one of the regiments

of the Line on my recommendation, and I never heard of him again.

"It is not astonishing that this prisoner should have received information concerning a theft of this importance in his cell. Intelligence of this kind is communicated more quickly and surely in the prisons of Paris than in the offices of the police.

"I have said that Lamiévette's revelation was due to the massacres of September, and this is the reason. The man was to have died on the scaffold in the beginning of the month. Wholly occupied with this terrible fate, he would not have thought of making this declaration, which would have been of no service to him, and besides, did not press upon his conscience, as he had nothing to do with the crime: the secret would therefore have perished with him. Delivered by the people, more easy as to his fate, he told it to a mulatto woman whom he had seen ministering to the prisoners. It was she who persuaded him to reveal it, and then he remembered me, in whom he had confidence, and gratitude induced him to choose me as the agent for restoring the stolen jewels to the nation.

"It will be remembered that Napoleon adorned his consular sword with the Crown diamonds, among which was the Regent or Pitt diamond, valued at several millions. A reward was decreed by law to those who had helped to discover or restore the articles stolen from the Treasury, and the reward was to be proportioned to their value. This

would have made the fortune of whoever obtained it.

"I had returned to Paris from Switzerland in 1797, and had gone back to my occupation of engraving. One day the mulatto woman called on me, accompanied by two gentlemen, with whom I was not acquainted. I was informed that this woman, who had ascertained that Lamiévette was dead, wanted to profit by the reward offered, and that she had already presented a memorial to the Consul. But a certificate was required to prove that she had really been the revealer of the secret, and she could obtain this important document only from me or Pétion. Now the Maire was dead. The police reports kept by me mentioned neither her nor Lamiévette, as I have clearly stated. I willingly gave her the certificate, drawn up according to the advice of one of the gentlemen who was her advocate in this affair. The other, who called himself a banker, and lived in the Place Vendôme (I cannot recollect his name), said to me, 'I am authorized by madame to offer you the sum of 100,000 francs out of the reward which she is to receive for the service you have rendered to her, and in fulfilment of your own right to part of the reward.' 'No, sir,' was my reply, 'I have no right to profit by this reward, because I at that time fulfilled only my duty as a magistrate; the whole ought to belong to the revealer. The certificate which I shall now give (and I cannot refuse) to madame is only the complement of my old duties.

I refuse your offer. I have never *sold* my duties. I persisted in my refusal. 'Every one has not your delicacy,' rejoined the advocate, 'for my companion can tell you that the Councillor of State charged with the report made sure of 200,000 francs in bills of exchange.' I was told his name. (Signed, Sergent Marceau. Formerly Municipal Officer, Administrator of Police, and of the Ammunition for the National Guard in 1791 and 1792.)

"The *Revue Rétrospective* adds, 'By a decree of the *Conseil des anciens*, in the meeting of the 29th *Pluviôse*, *year* 5 (22nd February, 1797), 6000 francs indemnity are awarded to the Citoyenne Corbin, the first discoverer of the theft of the Crown jewels.' This Corbin was doubtless the coloured woman, who had reduced her demands, for the dates coincide. The *Moniteur* says, 'The commissioners' inquiries tend to prove that whatever the Minister Roland may have said, this theft was not connected with any political conspiracy; it was the result of the criminal machinations of the wretches whom the massacres of the 2nd September set free, while they caused the death of the best men in France."

CHAPTER X.

1792-3.

Meeting of the Convention, Sept. 21—Sergent elected one of the Members for Paris—Madame Roland—Duke of Orleans—Parties in Convention—Panis and Sergent praised—Marat impeached and acquitted—Decrees—Prisoners in the Temple—Trial of the King—The Iron Safe—Cowardice of the Gironde—Sergent's speech—Condemnation and Execution of Louis XVI.—Sergent justifies himself—Sergent's artistic Services—Creation of the Gallery of the Louvre.

Soon after the events recorded in the last chapter, the sittings in the Electoral Assembly began. Sergent was an elector, and had to give up his post as Administrator of Police, which he had held for eighteen months, and he likewise ceased to attend the meetings of the Comité de Surveillance and the Conseil Général de la Commune. He was elected one of the twenty-four members for Paris. They all belonged to the extreme Left (the Montagne), and were distrusted by the Girondins.

"One day," he says,[1] "I entered Madame Roland's boudoir, and found her surrounded by a circle of deputies. She was giving a most revolting description of the members for Paris. Pétion, who was standing by, said, pointing to me, 'At least you will except this one.' She complied with some hesitation, for

[1] From Sergent's notes on Madame Roland's memoirs.

I had offended her by refusing to give her secret information. We however prevailed on her to except also Thomas and Dussaulx. Therefore in her opinion there were only three tolerably honest men among the twenty-four. Gensonné, Guadet, Brissot, and Barbaroux applauded. I could not stand this, and I said, 'Before you judge us, wait until you see us in the tribune.'"

One of these deputies was the celebrated Duke of Orleans, first cousin of the king. Disgusted with his vices, the Court had foolishly alienated him, and he became their bitterest enemy. The electors objected to the name of Orleans, he therefore desired the General Council to give him another. They replied that as a reward for the zeal for liberty he had shown from the beginning of the Revolution, "he should be adorned with the beautiful name of Egalité."

Although Sergent despised the duke's moral character, and spoke to him only twice in his life, he says—

[1] "If any one contributed to the nomination of M. d'Orléans, it was I, for I obtained for him the suffrages of the electors *extra muros* who consulted me. I persuaded them for the sole reason that it would have been a triumph for the Court party to see the people reject with contempt a man who had made great sacrifices of fortune in the popular cause, whatever may have been the aim he proposed to himself; for it was he who suggested and published (in 1789) Sièyes' pamphlet, 'What is the third estate?' I saw the duke shrug his shoulders on

[1] *Revue Rétrospective*, pp. 329, 330.

receiving the name 'Egalité' from Manuel; he spoke of it with withering sarcasm. As we were leaving the Hôtel-de-Ville, I said laughingly, 'How well it suits you—the name of a nymph—you, a colonel of hussars with black mustachioes?' 'You will bear witness,' he replied, 'that I did not present myself to the Council in order to change my name, and that this one has been imposed on me. You heard the galleries applaud that lout Manuel. What could I say or do? I came to solicit in favour of my daughters, whose mother keeps them in London, and who will be declared emigrants. It was this pressing interest which induced me to sacrifice my repugnance to adopting this ridiculous name."

The Salle de Manège in which the sittings of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies had been held, was only the riding-school belonging to the palace of the Tuileries. It was not large enough to admit the spectators desired by the Jacobins. "We require a place," said Marat, "which will hold 4000 spectators; the National Convention must be continually under the eyes of the people, that its members may be stoned if they neglect their duty."

The Grande Salle des Suisses in the palace of the Tuileries was being prepared, and in it met the members of the old and new Assemblies on September 21st. The arrangements not being quite finished, the Convention, 479 in number, marched back again to the old Manège, where it continued to sit until the following May.

The Gironde, led chiefly by Vergniaud and Brissot, now formed the Right or Conservative party; the Left—the Montagne—was led by Danton Robespierre

and Marat went even farther in advocating desperate measures, and in the end overpowered the Dantonists, to whom Sergent, abandoning his friend Pétion, seems to have adhered. He writes—

[1] "The National Convention had scarcely assembled, when it split in two parties, which, unfortunately for the nation, came into collision on the spot. I took my place among the members whose patriotism was well known to me, and by whose side I had fought for liberty ever since the beginning of the Revolution. I never quitted my post until the close of this august Assembly, to which, in spite of its terrible mistakes, posterity will render more justice than its contemporaries. I wish to make one observation which has hitherto escaped notice. There was not one among the much-calumniated twenty-four deputies for Paris who was not fit to appear advantageously in the tribune, with a reasonable prospect of obtaining influence (they were steeped in calumnies in the hope of neutralizing their talents). But the members of this deputation had no rallying-point; they never met together, scarcely spoke to each other, and never once assembled to consider a decision. There is another still more astonishing fact, that neither the Municipality nor the Sections ever asked their opinion on any subject. What influence then could these deputies have exercised over the events which ensued? Indeed, they almost all perished on the scaffold, the victims of the tyranny of the Committee of Public

[1] From Sergent's Memoir written in 1801.

Safety. If the members for Paris had chosen, they might have governed France, instead of which, three of them threw her into mourning—Robespierre, Collot d'Herbois, and Billaud Varennes—and these three sent the rest to the guillotine."

For a short time the reaction consequent on the massacres of September seemed to throw the power into the hands of the Gironde. Roland made several protests against the Commune, which to our ears sound feeble, but which show a considerable amount of courage, considering the position of the Minister. It was like that of the keeper of a menagerie; the wild beasts were divided from him by a very feeble partition; at any moment the tiger, unless kept in good-humour, might break the barrier.

The first act of the Convention was to abolish Monarchy and proclaim the Republic. On Sept. 22nd, on a proposal for renewing the magistracy, Sergent spoke in favour of putting no limit to the eligibility of candidates.[1]

"It is a great truth," he said, "that the people should have unlimited power of choosing those whom it thinks worthy of confidence."

In this sitting Sergent proposed the erection of a colossal statue of Liberty (it was the same which Madame Roland apostrophized from the scaffold). Some time afterwards he obtained a decree for erecting a statue to the "virtuous, sublime, and immortal Jean Jacques Rousseau."

The Girondins demanded a report on the state of Paris, a law against the promoters of murder, in fact an investigation into the causes of the September massacres, and a guard to protect the Convention

[1] See the *Moniteur* for these speeches of Sergent.

against the mob. The Montagne violently opposed, and Sergent spoke against these measures; nevertheless, a committee was granted to consider them. The Jacobins were furious, they accused the Gironde of wishing to break up France and destroy the supremacy of Paris. The Gironde retorted by accusing Marat and Robespierre and Danton of aiming at establishing a triumvirate. Danton disclaimed all partnership with Marat, who, he declared, had long been aiming at dictating to the Commune.

Marat appeared to defend himself in the Convention; the members greeted him with a shriek of horror. "It seems that I have a great many enemies here," he said. "All! all!" they cried. He proceeded to develop his system—that a dictator should be appointed for the sole purpose of taking off criminal heads. Boileau moved that "this monster be removed to the Abbaye." Marat, however, with infinite skill flattered the Assembly, praised himself, and obtained the withdrawal of the accusation. On which he pointed a pistol at his own forehead, and said that if the decree had passed, his intention had been to blow out his brains.

On the 1st of October, Tallien proposed a vote of thanks to "two men who have deserved well of their country, who perhaps have saved her! I wish to name Panis and Sergent."

On the 15th, Sergent joined Manuel in proposing the abolition of the Order of St. Louis and other decorations, and soon afterwards he joined La Reveillière-Lepeaux in soliciting a decree offering the assistance of France to all nations wishing to recover their liberty.

But the absorbing subject of interest to all parties was the fate of the prisoners in the Temple. From the moment they entered its fatal gates, the royal family had been treated with increasing severity.

At first it was almost a relief to Louis XVI. that he had no longer to decide or to act. He was allowed books, and he read immensely—250 volumes, it is said, during his captivity—chiefly works of history and devotion; he gave lessons to his little son, and read aloud to the princesses. The family were allowed to take exercise together in the garden; but when it was observed that looks of sympathy were directed on them from the opposite windows, they were confined to their rooms, where the lower part of the windows was planked up. They were never lost sight of by the municipal officers, who even desired the princesses to talk louder at meals, that they might hear what was said. On one of their guards showing some sensibility, he was removed to the Abbaye, and had to pay for his compassion with his head. Only faint echoes of what was passing without reached their ears; but in the beginning of their captivity the mob was suffered to brandish without remonstrance the head of the Princesse de Lamballe before the windows of the queen, and when the monarchy was abolished, Hébert (author of the *Père Duchesne*) asked to be one of a deputation to announce the decree to the king, that he might see how it was received. They were so ill provided with clothes that the ladies had to sit up at night to mend their own and the king's garments.[1] But the privation from which the king suffered most acutely was that he was not allowed to see a priest, or consequently to join in any of the offices of religion. On the 29th of Sept., paper, pens, ink, and pencils were taken from them, and the king was separated from his family. On this the queen's grief was so violent, that the jailers feared lest she should escape their clutches, and the order

[1] See Madame de Tourzel's memoirs. She and the English ambassadress managed to convey some linen to the queen.

was so far relaxed as to allow the family to join the king at meals. On the 7th Dec. they were deprived of knives, razors, scissors, and all cutting instruments, so fearful were the municipal authorities lest their victims should escape, even by death, from the cage in which they were kept awaiting their masters' pleasure.

In the midst of these indignities, Louis preserved his patience, resignation, and fortitude, the Princess Elizabeth her sweetness, and the queen her proud submission to the inevitable. On one occasion the king reproached himself for having brought his wife from the brilliant position in which she was born to such extreme misery. Marie Antoinette was sweeping out their prison, for their faithful attendants had all been dismissed with the exception of the king's valet Cléry (who left a written record of this time). "Ah, Madame," said the king, "what an occupation for the Queen of France! Who could have known, when I united your fate to mine, that you would have to undergo such privations?" "And do you count for nothing," replied the queen, "the glory of being the wife of the best and most persecuted of men? are not such misfortunes more majestic than all earthly grandeurs?"

The Convention was only indirectly responsible for these barbarities. It was the Commune who had the custody of the royal family, rough men most of them, who knew none of the refinements of life, and loved to wreak an ignoble vengeance on the objects of their envy. The majority in the Convention was unwilling to take the life of Louis XVI., and all sorts of technical objections were suggested. On the 13th November, Pétion moved that the Convention should decide the question, "Can the king be tried?" Morrisson spoke first; he wished to save the king, and it is curious to see by what

means he sought to influence the Assembly. "The first," he said, "of all my passions, the most natural without doubt, is to see this sanguinary monster expiate his crimes in the most cruel tortures." Nevertheless, he argued "that the person of a constitutional monarch was inviolable." If it were not so mournful, it would be ridiculous to think of describing the lonely prisoner, spending his time in reading and prayer, as a sanguinary monster.

Fauchet said, "Louis has merited more than death, eternal justice condemns the tyrant to the long punishment of life in the midst of a free people."

No one dared openly to defend the king, each party was afraid of the others, and still more of the mob in the galleries. Deputations also poured in bearing petitions, all demanding in the most bloodthirsty language the head of the tyrant. Some of the insurgents who were wounded on the 10th August were borne in on litters to testify to the barbarity of Louis XVI.

Robespierre had no scruples; he said, "Louis *was* king; the Republic is now established; the question you are debating is decided in these words. Louis cannot be sentenced, he is sentenced already. He is condemned, or the Republic is not absolved. I demand that the Convention declare Louis XVI. a traitor to France, a criminal against mankind, and condemned to immediate death in virtue of the Revolution."

The galleries received this discourse with enthusiasm, which was echoed by the populace outside. The Girondins did not venture to remonstrate. As a palliative, and in spite of the Montagne, it was decided that Louis XVI. should be tried by the Convention.

An iron safe had been constructed by the king while at the Tuileries, in which to deposit secret

papers. With his usual kindness he had made friends with Gamain, the workman employed, and on one occasion, when Gamain seemed exhausted, the king had poured him out a glass of wine with his own hands. This man told the secret of the safe, and added that he felt very queer after drinking the wine, suggesting that it was poisoned.

Roland proceeded to the Tuileries, opened the safe, discovered the papers, and brought them to the Convention. These papers formed the substance of the accusation. Among them were letters between the Court and Mirabeau, correspondences with the Emperor, with the king's brothers, and other emigrants. Sergent says[1]—

"From the very beginning of the Revolution, the king, after accepting the Constitution, secretly deposited in the archives of the Parliament a protest against everything which might be published in his name, alleging that, imprisoned by the people of Paris, he was no longer free. Likewise a courier who was arrested as a 'suspect,' and taken to the police, was found to be the bearer of a letter signed *Montmorin, Minister, by order of the King.* This letter contained an order to the ambassador at Vienna to inform secretly the Imperial Cabinet that no attention was to be paid to a former letter of which the king had authorized the publication, and which declared to the foreign powers that the king would consider every act hostile to the new laws sanctioned by himself in France as a personal attack. This declaration was actually published by the Austrian Court. The

[1] From the Memoir dictated in 1847.

letter found upon the courier nullified, therefore, all that Louis had ostensibly promulgated, and coincided with his demand for assistance to deliver him from the prison in which, as he said, his people kept him. This proves evidently the falseness of his public acts, and the little confidence to be placed in his word, although it was called sacred. It is very probable that similar letters were sent to all the Courts."

These two remarkable facts are enough to quiet M. Sergent's conscience with regard to his vote against Louis XVI.

On the morning of December 11th, the sound of troops assembling and drums beating warned the prisoners that some extraordinary event was at hand, and soon the king was informed that the maire and the procureur[1] were coming to take him to the bar of the Convention. He was desired to retire to his own apartment, and to see his family no more until his sentence had been pronounced.

The new maire (Chambon) read the decree to the king, addressing him as Louis Capet. "Capet is not my name," he replied, "it was that of one of my ancestors. I am ready to follow you, not in obedience to the Convention, but because you have force on your side."

He was taken to the Convention in the maire's carriage; the windows were down, and all could see him. He maintained his usual mild dignity, his face expressed neither grief nor anger. When the court of the Feuillants was reached the maire gave him up to Santerre and the armed force, who led him to the bar of the Convention. A long list of his pretended

[1] Chambon and Chaumette had succeeded to Pétion and Manuel.

crimes was read to him; he was charged with all the blood shed since the beginning of the Revolution. Those insurrections which the Montagnards, Sergent amongst them, and the Girondins were so proud of having stirred up, the 20th June, the 10th August, were now said to be the work of Louis XVI. His answers to these false charges produced an impression in his favour, but in his replies to the interrogatory that followed he assumed the false position of an ordinary accused prisoner, refusing to inculpate himself. He denied all knowledge of the letters and papers produced against him, and of the iron chest. It would have been better either to refuse to recognize the tribunal, following the example of Charles I., or else to have boldly acknowledged that he concerted with Mirabeau and others on the means of saving the monarchy and the nation from the hands of a faction. Any line, however, that he might have taken would have led to the scaffold, for he was prejudged. When the interrogatory was over, Santerre again took the king by the arm and led him back to the carriage.

After the king left the Assembly a violent discussion arose. Pétion and the Gironde, in spite of Marat and the Montagne, obtained permission for the king to choose two lawyers to defend his cause. Louis chose Tronchet and Target, two of the most celebrated advocates. Target refused, and then the venerable Malesherbes, who was past seventy years of age, had thrice been minister, and had been well known in former days for his liberal principles, solicited and obtained the honour of defending his former master. The meeting between them was most affecting. The king tried to dissuade the old man. "Your devotion," he said, "will endanger your life, and will not save mine."[1] Malesherbes endeavoured to kindle a ray of hope in the breast of the

[1] He was guillotined in 1794.

prisoner. "No," said the king, "I know they will sentence me to death, but let us act as if we were to win our cause, and in truth I shall win, for I shall leave an unstained memory." A younger advocate, De Sèze, was joined to the other two.

On December 26th the king was again taken to the bar of the Convention. His fate was already sealed, and the able defence read by De Sèze produced no effect. It was too true, to quote the words of the advocate, that "in vain one sought for judges in the Assembly, none but accusers were to be seen on the benches." The king added a few words, "the last," as he said, "that he should ever speak to them," to express his grief at being accused of shedding the blood of his people—"I who would have given the last drop of my own to spare theirs."

When the king had withdrawn, Manuel proposed that his defence should be printed and sent to the eighty-three departments, and all discussion adjourned for three days. On this there was the most violent commotion. Lanjuinais,[1] who to the end, with the utmost consistency and bravery, tried to save the king, said that "Louis XVI. ought not to be judged by those conspirators who from that very tribune had proclaimed themselves the authors of the insurrection of the 10th August." Cries of "à l'Abbaye" followed this speech; but Lanjuinais was not to be silenced. "You cannot be judges," he continued, "for you have already pronounced sentence." Danton and Robespierre argued for immediate death. In vain Pétion and the Girondists tried to make themselves heard. "A bas le roi, Jerôme Pétion," cried the Montagnards and the galleries—his reign of popularity was over. The majority of the Convention refused to be forced into immediate judgment, and

[1] It is consoling that Lanjuinais was one of the few who escaped the guillotine.

it was decreed that every member had a right to pronounce his opinion on the whole case.

Three weeks of agitation followed. The violence of the Montagnards frightened the Girondins, and they began to waver. They still hoped that an appeal to the people might at any rate commute the sentence from death to banishment; but the majority of votes was for an immediate decision. It was decreed that each member should proclaim his vote from the tribune, "that France might know which were her enemies." At eight in the evening of Wednesday, January 17th, the voting, which lasted till Sunday morning, began. Carlyle has vividly pictured this strange scene.

"Long night wears itself into day, morning's paleness is spread over all faces; and again the wintry shadows sink, and the dim lamps are lit: but through day and night and the vicissitudes of hours, member after member is mounting continually those tribune steps; pausing aloft there, in the clearer upper light, to pronounce his fate-word; then diving down into the dusk and throng again. . . . Man after man mounts; the buzz hushes itself till he have spoken: Death: Banishment: Imprisonment till the Peace. . . . The balance trembles. . . Whereat anxious Patriotism bellows; irrepressible by ushers."

Vergniaud was the voice of the Girondins, as Brissot was their pen. He happened to be President of the Assembly, and his vote would probably influence the others. He had vehemently opposed Robespierre's speech demanding the king's death. All eyes were fixed on him in breathless expectation when he ascended the tribune. Yielding to a deplorable weakness, he stammered out the sentence of

death. Almost all his party followed his example;[1] they could not bear to yield the palm of popularity to the Montagne. The Duke of Orléans voted for death on his honour and conscience.

The majority of the votes for death was so small that had it not been for the pusillanimity of the Girondins, the scale would have turned the other way. Sergent was at least consistent. He spoke as follows—

"CITIZENS,

"It has been my duty to pronounce the sentence of death upon those enemies of liberty who had borne arms against their country; I have also, and my heart was wrung, pronounced a similar sentence on individuals of the weaker sex, who perhaps had committed no other crime than that of wishing, from affection, to share the fate of their husbands. I have pronounced it on children, who for the most part were guilty only of a sacrifice to filial obedience. No matter! the safety of the country demanded these measures. I fulfilled this *melancholy duty!* I likewise pronounced this sentence on those who tried to restore the monarchy. All that is left for me is to give my vote against a *perjured king, the chief of conspirators.*

"I have long been convinced of the guilt of Louis. Reason, justice, nature and law, all say that he deserves to die. One of my colleagues, Manuel, has said, 'A dead king is only a man the less.' I do not

[1] It is refreshing to note, that in spite of the danger they ran, Manuel, Condorcet, Lanjuinais, Dussaulx, Boissy d'Anglas, Kersaint, Rabaut, Sillery, and Salles voted on the other side.

agree with him, for I think that the death of a king is felt throughout the universe—such an enormous mass must fall with a crash. *Louis as a man* is no doubt contemptible, but as a *king*, *Louis* still exercises political influence in Europe.

"I have not shut my eyes to the dangers which may result from the decision of the Assembly; I have examined, balanced, weighed everything, and I am convinced that the allied sovereigns will declare war against us whether we pardon or whether we punish Louis. Well, then, it is perfectly clear to my conscience that both justice and the public interest demand that Louis shall be punished with *death.* I vote therefore for *Death!*

"Note, that it does not accord with my principles to calumniate my colleagues when they speak in the name of their conscience (as some have done when they permitted themselves to address, even from the tribune, indecent apostrophes against those who, like me, have thought and think conscientiously to serve their country by condemning Louis to death—miserable orators who can only support their argument by invective); but I feel that I ought to proclaim in what character and armed with what powers I have given my vote. Some of my colleagues have considered themselves judges, others as legislators, hence the confusion of opinions. Before ascending the tribune—from the very beginning of this important affair—the following has been the result of my considerations:—

"The People, who never should exercise the functions of judge in cases of particular crimes and interests, can and must exercise them in cases of public crimes against its sovereignty, and especially against any members who have sinned against the 'Contrat social,' or been guilty of crimes of a similar nature. Thus we have seen one of the Horaces brought before the Sovereign People in Rome, and rescued by another trial from the punishment inflicted on him by the Senate. The People created a new law for this criminal, wishing to punish and to pardon him at the same time. The People when united in a sovereign assembly is no longer bound by laws or forms; the People make their own law on the spot, but it will last only as long as the emergency, and after this *plébiscite* the laws will resume their former vigour. Therefore, the general will of a whole People in sovereign assembly may acquit of any action, however atrocious it may appear, an individual brought before this supreme tribunal. This is no paradox. In a republic so large as to make it impossible to collect a whole nation in one place, we must adopt the representative system, sometimes unlimited and sometimes limited. It is obvious that this kind of representation has all the powers of a sovereign; it *is* the sovereign. This is the government which the French People has adopted, it is represented with full powers by the National Convention.

"According to my principles, therefore, Louis has been brought before the assembled People, and it is

as a member of that People that, in accordance with my conscience and my political opinions, I have given my vote; not as a judge, a legislator, or a statesman, but as a citizen, a fraction of the sovereign assembly of the People."[1]

Meanwhile the king was kept in seclusion. His advocates came to the bar and demanded with tears an appeal to the people, or at least a delay. Vergniaud, repentant, also asked for delay; but a majority of seventy, at three o'clock on Sunday morning, decreed "Death within twenty-four hours."

Almost overwhelmed with grief, the venerable Malesherbes announced the sad decision to his friend and sovereign, who endeavoured to soothe and comfort him, and at the same time implored him not to forsake him until the last moment. This also was refused by the Convention. They never met again.

Garat, who had succeeded Danton as Minister of Justice, was charged with announcing the sentence to the fallen monarch. "What a horrible duty!" he said. He was so overpowered he could hardly speak. Louis gave him a paper containing his last wishes. Garat could not command himself enough to read it. The king took it from him and read it aloud. In it he asked for a delay of three days to prepare for death, for a confessor, for leave to see his family without witnesses, and to be delivered from the incessant interruptions to which his ignorant jailers had lately subjected him. He entreated the Convention to spare his wife and family, and to allow them to retire to some peaceful asylum; and he also asked that the nation, in its benevolence, would succour those pensioners of the crown, many of them old men,

[1] This discourse was printed by order of the Convention.

women and children, who would be utterly penniless without assistance.

Garat was quite overcome by the fortitude of Louis XVI. "What a man!" he said afterwards; "what courage! what resignation! Nature alone cannot give such strength, there is something superhuman about him!"

The king's request for a confessor was the only one of his entreaties granted by the Convention. He chose the excellent Abbé Edgworth, the confessor of the Princess Elizabeth. In spite of his own appalling fate, he was keenly alive to the happiness of seeing the abbé once more; he apologized for his emotion, saying that "it was so long since he had seen any but hostile faces." A long quiet conversation ensued, in which the king asked with great interest after all his friends, and heard for the first time of many public events which had occurred since his imprisonment.

The king dreaded the farewell meeting with his family. The private interview he had asked for was not granted, but as a concession he was allowed to see them in a room with glass doors. No words can describe that heartrending scene, it is more reverent to draw a veil over such sacred, such supreme emotions. The agony was almost too great for human endurance, it left the king utterly exhausted. The worst was over; he had done with time, as he said to the abbé, he must think now of eternity. The greater part of the night was spent in fulfilling his religious duties. He went carefully over every event in his reign; his conscience acquitted him of ever failing in love for his people. Of private vices he had none, and the political crimes laid to his charge were some of them utterly false, and he could not see the guilt of others. His intentions had been pure throughout. He slept peacefully, and was awakened before daybreak to

receive the communion. He had promised to see his family once more, but he felt that he dared not expose them and himself to such an ordeal. He took off his marriage-ring and his seal, and gave them to Cléry for his wife and son, and asked that his valet might be allowed to cut off his hair to send to them, but this was refused At eight o'clock Santerre arrived, accompanied by twelve municipal officers and ten gendarmes. The king asked for a moment's delay, went into his room, and after shutting the door implored once more on his knees the blessing of his confessor. He came back calm and collected, and asked one of the officers to give a paper he held in his hand to the queen. A murmer of indignation followed this hated title. "To my wife," said the king; "it is my will." Then turning to Santerre, "Marchons," he said, and with a firm step led, rather than followed in, the sad procession.

Extraordinary precautions had been taken to prevent a rescue; the streets were lined with armed men, there was a profound silence. The municipal officers, who with the Abbé Edgworth were in the king's carriage, were surprised to see their victim absorbed in reading the psalms. He looked neither to the right nor to the left during the slow two hours' drive. They reached the Place de la Révolution at ten. He attempted to address the people from the scaffold, but Santerre ordered the drums to beat so as to drown his voice. In a few minutes the fatal knife fell, and the executioner held up the head of the royal victim to the populace. Some fanatics who had surrounded the guillotine jumped upon it in wild glee, dipping their pikes and handkerchiefs in the blood, and shouting "Vive la République!" but there was no response, and the crowd departed silently.

Sergent declares that there could have been no considerable party in favour of sparing the king,

or the National Guards might easily have saved him.

[1] "The National Guard amounted to eighty thousand men. They were all called out on January 21st; every post in Paris was occupied by them; from the Temple to the Place Louis XV. they formed a hedge; the Place was filled with them. If they had chosen to save the king no one could have prevented them. Where would there have been any resistance? the mass was of unarmed people."

Sergent never acknowledged that the condemnation of Louis XVI. was even an error.

[2] "The members of the Assembly have been called regicides and assassins on account of the death of Louis XVI., he is considered as a martyr. But we might answer that the members of the Convention were appointed by the People to form a new government, in order to judge the recent events, and especially the persons confined in the Temple. With such a mission one is a judge, not an assassin. Again, it will be remembered that this great trial was conducted with dignity, and according to the proceedings settled by law. If a crime, it was one that was committed and publicly acknowledged in the face of the whole world."

It is a relief to turn from these scenes of anarchy and bloodshed to Sergent's valuable services in the cause of art.

[1] Notes on *Souvenirs d'un demi Siècle.*
[2] Memoir dictated in 1847.

[1] "A few days after I joined the Convention I was surprised to hear that I was appointed a member of the Commission of Fine Arts and Public Edifices. I attended for two years all the committees of artists in painting, architecture, sculpture, and engraving who united to prepare petitions and reports for the information of the Assembly. I presided often over these meetings, and I was almost always employed in drawing up their addresses and reports. As I was also a deputy, I was able to serve the cause of art still more efficaciously, to the satisfaction of my constituents and of all the artists. I may be permitted to pride myself in having been the creator of the Museum of Paintings [2]—De Hailli, who was one of the curators, was pleased to call me its father.

"Roland, the Minister of the Interior, had already put together in a gallery of the Louvre all the pictures in the king's chamber; but this gallery was not open to the public, and there seemed no reason why it should ever be increased. The Committee for Public Buildings had, before I joined it, stopped short; weary of its labours which had been frustrated, it cared no longer for anything which entailed work. I took advantage of the moment when the Constitution was just finished, and all the deputies were summoned from the departments, to ratify the acts of the Committee in accordance with the will of the nation, and when also the *fêtes* celebrating the event would be

[1] Memoir written in 1801.
[2] The celebrated gallery of the Louvre.

sure to attract crowds. I proposed to the Assembly to collect in the gallery I have mentioned all the objects of art belonging to the nation; to extricate them from the obscurity in which they were buried, and to intrust the curators already appointed with the office of arranging them in this gallery, so as to offer these treasures not only to the admiration of the nation, but to the astonished eyes of all Europe. I asked that this Museum of Paintings, as it was called, might be always open to art students, and once a week to the public. I obtained this decree without any discussion.

"It is to me then, artists, that you owe this celebrated gallery.

"The splendour with which it suddenly shone forth in the first year of the Republic (1792-3) is due also to the Commissioners for Public Institutions, who laboured indefatigably, and endured every sort of annoyance for the love of art.

"I repeat once more with legitimate pride—Parisians, I gave you the charitable committees (*comités de bienfaisance*), I saved you from famine, and I created for you the finest gallery in the world. If I had done nothing more, should I not, I repeat, have deserved well of you and of my country? and yet it is in Paris that I am forced to justify myself against calumny. Cicero on his departure to exile consecrated a statue to Minerva in the Capitol, with this inscription, 'To Minerva, the protector and guardian of Rome.' Now that I am starting on my

banishment, I dedicate the Museum of the Louvre to the glory of the French people. This is my consecration.

"Again, it was I who preserved your buildings from the fury of the Vandals who were paid by English gold, the inventors of the disgusting *sans-culottism*, which was sent over to us from England on purpose to dishonour us, to dishonour the most polished and literary nation in the world."

It is very amusing that whenever Sergent cannot approve of the doings of the mob, he lays the blame on England. It was English gold, according to him, that paid the assassins of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld on the 4th September, whereas it seems in reality to have been a mere brutal impulse.

Sergent gives a list of the decrees passed by the Convention in consequence of his motions and reports.

[1] "1. Condemning to two years' imprisonment in irons any person mutilating statues in public places.

"2. To organize a band of 'Invalides' to watch over the statues in the Tuileries gardens.

"3. To organize a commission partly of artists and partly of nominees of the Convention, to decide on the means for effacing the badges of royalty from all public edifices. (This law preserved the gate of St. Denis, on which the bas-reliefs had been already mutilated; the fine pavement under the *dôme* of the Invalides, which it was proposed to destroy in order to efface the *fleur de lys;* likewise it preserved a number of things for us in the departments.)

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

"4. To order the bindings of the books in the National Library not to be touched until the Commission have reported on the means of effacing the signs of royalty without damaging the books. (I delivered a speech protesting against the stupid barbarism which wanted to tear off the armorial bearings from the bottoms of engravings and the frontispieces of books.)

"5. To order that no statue, picture, engraving, or other valuable object of art in the houses belonging to emigrants or other national property should be sold, but that everything of the sort should be brought to the Hôtel de Nesle, to be disposed of according to the decision of the commissioners. (In an apartment at the Tuileries was found a piece of tapestry all in gold. I did all I could to preserve this precious relic of French industry, for nothing like it is ever worked in these days. It was burnt as if it had been an old carpet. This is what the English wanted!)

"6. To order commissioners to be sent to all the houses formerly royal palaces, to choose any objects suitable for embellishing the National Palace, the garden, the Hall of the Convention, and its committee rooms. (I was appointed one of the commissioners, and to me are owing the statues, busts, and marble benches which now adorn the Tuileries. I marked with my seal the groups in lead that were at Marly to ornament the basins in the Tuileries, which looked too bare. In spite of this they were sold by the pound.)

"7. To order a competition for a portrait of J. J. Rousseau voted by the Constituent Assembly. (Unfortunate philosopher! the three most powerful Assemblies in the world ordered this fitting monument to your greatness, and it has not yet been executed, while two hours were enough to enable the Parliament to banish you from the kingdom!)

"8. To order the Museum to be lighted from above.

"9. To order all the precious gems found in the chapels of St. Denis, of Rheims and Chartres, and in the Sainte Chapelle to be taken to the National Library.

"10. To order the two fine horses at Marly to be transferred to Paris to ornament the National Palace. (Citizen David placed them where they now are; in my report, which elicited a rude sarcasm from him, I proposed them for the Carrousel.)

"11. To order the orange-trees at St. Cloud to be transported to the Tuileries. (I protested energetically against the detestable idea of the Commune, which *forced* the Convention to plant potatoes in the Tuileries. I tried one morning to turn out the labourers, but the Committee would not support me. To plant potatoes in the most beautiful garden in Europe! This was an anti-revolutionary idea, an English conception! I afterwards had it laid down in grass.)

(12 and 13 are unimportant.)

"14. To order the Commune des Arts sitting at the Louvre to appoint a jury to judge the pictures exhibited at the Salon, and award prizes.

"15. To order a copy of every engraving to be sent to the National Library.

"16. To order the banishment of all booths and refreshment stalls from the National Palace and gardens. (I obtained three decrees for this purpose, and could get neither of them carried into effect.)

"17. To order a railing all along the court by the Carrousel.

"18. To secure copyright to artists, and prevent imitations of their works.

"I wrote a report which was never made public, but which was registered by the Committee, on the improvements to be made in the palace and in the gardens of the Tuileries and the Champs Elysées. (It was afterwards made use of when these gardens were altered. *Sic vos non vobis.*)

"I refused to have this report read in the Assembly, and my reasons for so doing may give an idea of my character. The Committee of Public Safety ordered enormous works for embellishing the palace and the gardens. After fixing the plans and distributing the work to the artists, and appointing a special committee composed of the deputies Fournay and David, it ended by ordering the Committee of Inspectors, whose business it was, to execute these orders. I was charged with the report, and as I thought that the Committee of Public Safety had presumed too far on its self-constituted powers, I did not spare it. I also allowed myself some reflections on Citizen David, with regard to the artists whom

he had displeased. It required some courage at that time to speak out. However, as my proposals were in accordance with his views, he sanctioned my report and registered it. I attempted two or three times to speak from the tribune, but failed to command attention. Then came the 9th Thermidor; the Committee lost its power and David his liberty. I then told the Committee of Inspectors that I should consider it cowardly to read my report attacking a fallen committee, and a deputy who, after insulting me from the tribune, and slandering me in the clubs, was now in prison. The Committee of Inspectors approved of my delicacy, and without either a report or a decree we did all that the law allowed us. It may be supposed from what I have said that my report was strongly worded, considering the state of the times—the scaffolds were standing! we could see them from the tribune."[1]

[1] This was in 1794.

CHAPTER XI.

1793—1794.

The King's death divided parties—Europe against France—The Clubs—Pillage of shops—Marat—Discord in Convention—Roland and his wife—Unpopularity of Girondins—Plots to upset them—Revolutionary Tribunal—Hébert pitied for his sufferings—The 31st May—Arrest of the Girondins—Sergent at Chartres—Charlotte Corday—Divine honours to Marat—"Comité de Salut Public"—Its members—Victims saved by Sergent—Levée en masse—Suspects—Energy of war-committee—Death of Queen—Death of Girondins—Of Madame Roland—Of Egalité—Worship of Reason—Sergent at Chartres—Marceau—Hébert—Robespierre destroys the Hébertists—Afterwards Danton and his followers—Fête de l'Être Suprême—Fall of Robespierre and his accomplices.

SERGENT was right when he said, "The death of a king is felt throughout the universe. Such an enormous mass must fall with a crash." But the effect was not what he anticipated. It divided all parties within the country, while it united all Europe against the new republic. England, which had hitherto kept out of the continental troubles, sent back the French ambassador, and to the surprise of the self-constituted rulers declared war against France.

Spain, which had in vain interceded for the life of the king, joined the coalition; only Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, and Turkey maintained their neutrality. Within the Convention the duel was between the Gironde and the Montagne. Roland

resigned on January 23rd; his influence had departed long before that date. He was succeeded by Garat; and Pache, who had proved his weakness and incapacity as Minister of War, was considered sufficiently pliable to be Maire of Paris. On tendering his resignation, Roland asked that his accounts might be audited. This was a hint for investigating the accounts of the Comité de Surveillance, and Sergent and Panis were asked for a statement of the disposal of the funds at their command, and of the many costly objects found on the prisoners. Panis exclaimed (Feb. 10th), "I choke with indignation." Although Sergent again and again justified himself against the accusation of larceny, the nickname of Sergent—Agate [1]—remained a weapon in the hands of his enemies. An attempt on the part of the Girondins to bring to justice the promoters of murder, in other words to investigate the whole conduct of the Comité de Surveillance since the 10th August, was vehemently opposed by Sergent, and fell to the ground.

The Jacobins now began to wage war on the Girondins. On one occasion (Feb. 9th), Sergent opposed his associates on the Montagne, when he warmly defended and obtained the acquittal of the garrison of Verdun for capitulating.

Among the besieged was his brother-in-law Marceau, whose tears, when he was deputed to carry the act of submission to the enemy, had even touched the heart of the King of Prussia.

The *Biographie Moderne* accuses Sergent of perpetual attacks on his former friends, the Girondins, but there is no trace of them in his papers, or in the

[1] See *ante*, p. 243, for a full account. The Agate was a stone in a ring cut as a cameo, by a jeweller called Marchand. It was worth only forty francs. Sergent restored it to the commune, and then repurchased it.

Moniteur.[1] Indeed he scarcely ever spoke in the spring of 1793, he devoted himself to his artistic labours and committees. In his notes on Anquetil he says,

"In 1793 the Convention allowed itself to be governed by the Commune of Paris, which was ruled in its turn by some miserable wretches and lunatics who, without talent, had learned to fascinate the people."

The Jacobin and Cordelier Clubs retained their power, the Club of the Evêché went still further in stirring up insurrection.

Marat was the idol of the galleries, he was the real mixture of tiger and monkey. His antics in the Convention were those of a mountebank, while his sanguinary speeches and writings horrified even Danton and Camille Desmoulins.

Four years of revolution had not produced prosperity. The excessive use of Assignats had made everything dear. The sections sent deputations to the Convention, demanding a law of *maximum* to fix the price of provisions. If the *accapareurs*, as the shop people and merchants were called, ventured to sell at a higher price, imprisonment was to be the punishment for the first offence, and death for the second. Even the Montagnards saw the absurdity of this proposal; Sergent spoke against it. The next proposal was to levy an enormous tax on all who were supposed to be able to pay it; but Marat, in his *Ami du People*, suggested a much shorter plan—to pillage the shops. Accordingly, early on the morning

[1] On one page of the *Moniteur* it is recorded that a woman had been condemned and executed for possessing a white cockade, and a man for having been an emigrant. On the next page, with a curious inconsistency, that the Convention had abolished the punishment of death for all private offences.

of the 26th Feb., immediately after the publication of Marat's paper, the bakers' and grocers' shops were besieged by a tumultuous crowd. Santerre was out of the way as usual, but towards nightfall he appeared with his National Guard, and dispersed the multitude. Sergent writes—

"There was no general pillage: the shops which suffered most were those of the ex-deputy D'André, a very rich man, who, after the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, became a grocer. He had six or seven shops which were pillaged, until the National Guard, under the orders of the Municipality, put an end to the robberies."[1]

In the Convention Salles denounced Marat for his incitement to plunder, and the Girondins with loud cries demanded his impeachment. "The pigs, the fools," he muttered, and moved that the *statesmen*, as he nicknamed the Coté Droit, should be removed to a lunatic asylum. Marat got off scot free.

Sergent says,

[2] "This was the first check to the Assembly. Although a Montagnard, M. Sergent was irritated by the scandalous debates in the Convention, and he said openly that the first violation of its laws had transformed this assembly into an arena of gladiators. It is right to inform posterity that the promoters of the discord and suspicion that reigned in the Convention were inspired and introduced by the partisans of Roland. Danton, indeed, may be accused of exciting the flame, when twice, in an animated discussion,

[1] Note on Anquetil.
[2] From the Memoir dictated in 1847.

he said from the Tribune: 'Would it not be well to ascertain the sentiments of Madame Roland?' She was twice called before the Bar to give information, and each time admitted to the honours of the sitting. Roland's conduct when Minister was that of an old man, the willing slave of a young and beautiful woman, who allowed himself to be ruled by her even in the most serious matters. Her interference in public affairs, brought forward so ostentatiously, only irritated the Assembly. She was open to the reproach of imitating Marie Antoinette, who had an Austrian committee. It was said of Madame Roland, that she had a Rolandist committee."[1]

The Girondins had in fact taken the place of Louis XVI. in the minds of the Sovereign people, and were called to account for all the evils which afflicted the country. They were aghast at their own unpopularity, but they could have studied history to little purpose not to have seen that in almost all revolutionary movements the leaders soon move too slowly to satisfy their followers, who out-run and then turn round and rend them. They had already seen party after party carried to the very summit of popularity, only to make its fall the greater. They still hoped to arrest the downward movement, much as if a rider who has allowed his steed to escape from his control should hope to stop it on its headlong course. After they themselves had set law and order at defiance on

[1] Paris was bristling with committees, and these committees were created, suspended, changed their names, were renewed and altered. In short, it is bewildering to try to keep pace with them. The celebrated "Comité de Surveillance" turned into the terrible "Comité de Salut Public," consisting of nine irresponsible members who played into the hands of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

the 10th August they invoked the aid of these great principles in their own defence. Within the Convention they still retained some influence, but the clubs were centres of conspiracies against them. The most influential was the club called indifferently the Archevêché or the Evêché. It was here that the plot was laid for attacking the Convention, and carrying off the Girondins on March 10th, but the intended victims got wind of it, and absented themselves from the evening sitting. They were also held responsible for the reverses sustained by the army under Dumouriez. Once more the country was declared in danger, more soldiers were called for, and Danton demanded the establishment of a special Tribunal from which there should be no appeal, to judge all traitors left in Paris, and obviate the necessity for the repetition of the scenes of September. It was at first called the "Tribunal Extraordinaire," and afterwards the "Tribunal Révolutionaire."

In the Memoir dictated in 1847, Sergent writes—

"During the whole time that M. Sergent was a member of the Convention not a single speech can be quoted against him approving of the Revolutionary Tribunal, for its composition revolted him; he knew too well Fouquier Tinville the public prosecutor, who had long been expelled from the Jacobins on account of his atrocious character. Sergent always considered him a despicable scoundrel."

The Girondins, to balance this Tribunal, instituted the Committee of twelve, composed of Modérés, to the disgust of the Montagnards, one of whom—Hébert—the Committee sent to the Abbaye for his abominable writings and incitements to assassination. The greatest sympathy was aroused among the

populace. Poor Hébert was pitied for "lying in prison on a wretched mattress." In spite of the Committee of twelve and the Assembly he was acquitted, and received back into the Convention with a tumult of applause from the Montagne and the galleries. Marat was again impeached for writing to stir up the departments against the Convention, and taken before the Revolutionary Tribunal, by which, of course, he was acquitted; he was carried in triumph in all his ostentatious filth and rags to the Assembly in the arms of the people, crowned with flowers, and applauded vociferously. Sergent says that he voted against his impeachment.

[1] "When it came to M. Sergent's turn (the votes were given aloud), he said, 'I despise Marat, but I respect the Deputy. It is a violation of the law of the Constitution which declares a deputy inviolable. I therefore vote against the motion, it might entail fatal consequences.'"

The insurrectional committee at the Evêché had decided that the Girondins and their Committee of twelve must be got rid of. On the night of the 30th May, Pache the Maire, worthy successor of Pétion, announced to the council of the Commune, sitting at the Mairie, that the citizens at the Evêché had declared themselves in a state of insurrection and had closed the barriers of the town. A deputation from the Evêché came to confirm these statements. The tocsin began to ring, the obedient commune desired to know the will of the sections, and at six on the following morning commissioners from the majority of the sections, in answer to this appeal, informed the council that it had ceased to exist. The Maire and other officers obeyed and took off

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847.

their scarves, whereupon the spokesman of the sections kindly told them that they should be reinstated in office, on condition of taking a new oath. Henriot, one of the Septembriseurs, was made generalissimo of the National Guard in succession to Santerre.

Pache carried the news to the Assembly. A stormy debate ensued. Danton and Robespierre violently attacked the Girondins and the Committee of twelve. A succession of deputations and petitioners streamed into the Hall calling for the impeachment of the enemies of the country, applauded by the galleries and supported outside by forty thousand armed men under Henriot. The Convention was conquered, the Committee of twelve suppressed, and on a motion of Vergniaud's (to save the dignity of the Assembly) the sections were declared to have deserved well of their country. At night Paris was illuminated and the members of the Convention, the Girondins among them, marched in a torch-light procession through the streets.

Roland had taken refuge in the house of a friend, but his wife scorned to fly; she was arrested in her own house and taken to the Abbaye.

The Jacobins felt that while the Girondins were left to influence the Assembly the work was only half done. The Comité de Salut Public took it in hand, supported by Pache and the municipality. On the morning of June 2nd, the tocsin again began to peal, the alarm gun on the Pont Neuf boomed, and Henriot invested the Assembly, now held in the Tuileries, with a force of one hundred thousand men. Several members of the Gironde had taken refuge with their friends, but Vergniaud, Barbaroux, Lanjuinais and others would not forsake their posts. In the very beginning of the sitting Lanjuinais demanded the deliverance of the Convention and of the city

from the thraldom of the insurgents. A violent tumult arose, the Montagnards tried to tear him from the Tribune, but he went on intrepidly. The insurgents rushed into the Hall, demanding the arrest of Lanjuinais and his colleagues. Barrère appealed to the patriotism of the Girondins, and asked them to suspend themselves. Isnard, Fauchet, Lanthenas and Dussaulx consented, but Lanjuinais and Barbaroux would not yield. A member of the Convention rushed in and said that the Convention was surrounded by troops, and its deliberations therefore not free. On this the President, followed by all the members, marched out. They were met by cries, "Deliver to us twenty-four of your members." "Deliver us all then," said the members to the President. Henriot ordered the guns to be levelled at them. The procession went on. Marat ran about encouraging Henriot and the troops. Every issue was closed, and the President and the whole assembly were forced to return to the Convention, slaves of the populace and of Marat, who himself dictated the list of the proscribed. They were confined to their domiciles, guarded each by two gendarmes, but many contrived to escape to Caen, where they organized a resistance against the Convention.

It is curious to see the leaders of the Revolution, after condemning their predecessors, follow in their steps. Louis XVI.,—who was the first to abolish privilege, and to do justice to the poor—Mirabeau, Lafayette, Dumouriez, the Girondins, all in turn believed France to be in the hands of the Parisian mob—a mischievous fraction of the nation, and invoked the aid of the provinces or of foreigners, to restore order and a permanent government.

Sergent denies having had any share in the proceedings against the Girondins.

"[1] I had obtained from the Convention a month's leave of absence, and I was going to Tours on the 31st May to deliver Marceau (at that time captain of Cuirassiers in the Légion Germanique) from prison. The carriage which was to take his sister and me, drove up to the door at three in the morning. Just then the tocsin sounded. I sent back the horses, and not knowing what might be going on, I ran to my post. I was the first to reach the Assembly. The Hall of the Comité des Inspecteurs was opened for me. Soon other members arrived, all asking why they were summoned. Many of the accused were among them.

"The barriers of Paris were closed. Nevertheless, on the 2nd June I obtained permission to pass through with my companion, on account of the services rendered by Marceau at Sédan. As soon as we reached Tours, I obtained the freedom of Marceau, and the restitution of his rank in the army. From this time his rapid advancement, his fame and success, may be dated. He was made Adjutant, next Brigadier-General by the Convention, and General of Division in La Vendée, by the Minister of War, Bouchotte, on 25th June.

"Let us be just to this Minister. Modest and unassuming, he was attacked by all parties. It was he who appointed the generals who made our armies illustrious in the early campaigns. At the same

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

time he passed over a great many *protégés*, and therefore had many enemies.

"In the prison at Tours I found Augereau, with four of his comrades. He was beating his head against the wall in despair, listening to the guns which were perhaps destroying his battalion. When I returned to Paris, my first care was to obtain his release and restoration to his soldiers who were calling for him.

"The accusations of Federalism, followed by destitution and imprisonment, now began. The Revolutionary Tribunal became formidable. Two citizens from Chartres were summoned to Paris to account for their conduct. They were afraid of being arrested, and applied to me. I set forth the services they had rendered to the Republic, and they were sent home."

The Provinces were far from approving the ferocious cruelties practised by the Committees. La Vendée, Brittany, the cities in the south—Lyons, Montpellier, Bordeaux, Nantes, were all in open revolt. Eleven of the Girondins held their head-quarters at Caen, and it was there that Charlotte Corday meditated her plan of saving her country, by ridding it of the wretch Marat. She came up alone to Paris, bought a sharp knife, drove to Marat's miserable lodging, and stabbed him as he lay in his bath; then gave herself up to justice, and died with unflinching courage and serenity.

Sergent tells the story of the executioner slapping her cheek after her head was cut off, and causing her to blush. He says—

"I did not see this horror; but as soon as I heard of it, I wrote to the President of the Tribunal, Hermand, to ask that, in the sitting of the next day, the executioner might be sentenced to a severe and public punishment for this crime against humanity. The judges thought as I did and he was imprisoned."

A young poet from Mayence, Adam Lux, fell enthusiastically in love with her. All he wished was to die for her. Sergent says—

[1] "Adam Lux ran to the Revolutionary Tribunal. While his sentence was being pronounced, his countenance was beaming, and he played with his fingers on the bar of the dock, as if it had been a piano. At four he was seen to take his place in the fatal tumbril, radiant with joy."

Almost divine honours were paid to the memory and remains of Marat. His heart was enclosed in an urn and suspended over an altar in the Cordeliers. It was thus apostrophized. "Precious remains of a god! thou callest for vengeance!" Pilgrimages were made to his tomb every Sunday, hymns were sung, and an obelisk raised to his memory. He had the good fortune to die while his star was in the ascendant; that of the Girondins had set for ever.

When Vergniaud heard of Charlotte Corday's crime and execution, "She has killed us," he cried; "but she has taught us how to die." The twenty-two in prison knew that they were lost; and the refugees in Normandy were forced to disperse. Nearly all perished from cold and hunger; some fell into the hands of their enemies, and a very few—among

[1] Notes on *Souvenirs d'un demi siécle.*

whom were Louvet and Lanjuinais[1]—survived to see better days.

The fourteen months which followed the arrest of the Girondins have been rightly named the Reign of Terror. The Montagne had overturned all its enemies, destroyed its most illustrious victims; and then, as Vergniaud said, had only its own children left to devour. The chiefs of the three factions—Danton, Robespierre, and Hébert—were each bent upon anticipating their own destruction by destroying each other. In speaking of the recriminations which prevailed, Sergent says—

[2] "Some philosophers pretend that friendship may exist between the greatest rascals, that good faith is not unknown amongst them, and that even though drunk with blood, they are capable of the devotion and sacrifices which one would expect to find only among the virtuous. This is an error. There can be neither faith, friendship, nor devotion among scoundrels; they have no motive but personal fear. Each one considers only himself. The silence of his accomplices is necessary; he is prepared to go any length to purchase it."

The Comité de Salut Public now ruled supreme over the Convention and France. Its instruments were the Comité de Sureté Générale, the Revolutionary Tribunal, and the guillotine.

Sergent says—

[3] "With the exception of Carnot, all the members of this Committee were apostles of the Gospel of

[1] Lanjuinais died in 1814, a peer of France.
[2] A fragment addressed "*À mon délateur.*"
[3] From "*À mon délateur.*"

Blood; Barrère had become one through fear. Billaud de Varennes had been a poor advocate, without clients or means; he first distinguished himself in the section of the Théâtre Français of which I was President when Louis escaped to Varennes. Soon afterwards, I obtained a place for him in the office of Danton, from whom he received his daily bread, and whose confidence he won. He repaid his benefactor by bringing him to the scaffold. I remember well that on the 30th or 31st August (1792), as I was passing through the hall of the Conseil Général, I heard him haranguing to the effect that it was necessary to empty the prisons. I was so far from understanding him (he and Barrère repeated this suggestion at the Comité de Salut Public), that I thought he meant to send the prisoners to serve in the army; and I said it would not be fair to send the prisoners from St. Pélagie, as they belonged to their creditors. He was also heard to say to the executioners on the 2nd September, '*On vous recompensera.*' Collot d'Herbois was as profoundly atrocious as Billaud."

Sergent succeeded in snatching sixty-eight victims from the Revolutionary Tribunal. One of them was the celebrated Abbé Barthélémy, who had been kind to him in early days at the House of St. Aubyn, and whose nephew was French minister at Berne.[1]

Sergent writes—

[1] The nephew showed his gratitude by kindness to Sergent and his wife when they were in exile. He was afterwards sent to die at Sinnamary by the Directoire, but escaped, returned to France in 1801, died a peer of France in 1830.

[1] "The author of Anarcharsis, Barthélémy, was arrested; as soon as I heard of it I ran to the Minister of the Interior in order to take prompt measures for restoring him to society. I found that the Minister had heard of the arrest, and had spent the night in endeavours to save him. He had succeeded, and the Abbé had just been set free. If I did not alone contribute to restore to Art, Robert, the painter, who had long been kept in prison, the steps I took, and the letters I wrote to the Comité de Sureté Générale, must have hastened his deliverance. I had the satisfaction of saving by my own exertions citizens Radet, Desfontaines, and three men of letters who have adorned our stage with charming little pieces. The celebrated actor Larive was included in the same proscription, which aimed at destroying all the artists; his family knows all that I did to save him. It must not be supposed that I was all powerful in these committees. On the contrary, it was only with great precautions that I was able to be of use to their unhappy victims, for I perceived that my own fatal hour was drawing nearer every moment. I read my fate in the eyes of some of the chief members. At the time when I saved the painter Boilly, whose works adorn our boudoirs, I knew that the thread of my destiny was in the scissors of the Fates—never mind, I could still restore one more artist to society before I died. I went to the Committee of Arts, which was under the influence of two demoniacs

[1] From the Memoir written in 1801.

whose patriotism I considered more than equivocal. They had decided, on the day before, that Boilly should be denounced at the Committee of Public Security for corrupting the public mind by immoral works, and they produced two or three engravings from pictures painted by him years before. I impressed upon the Committee the horrible consequences which would ensue. The Assembly had a few days before passed the decree of the twenty-second Prairial, conferring upon the Revolutionary Tribunal the power of sentencing all who had corrupted the public mind. It was the same thing as sending Boilly to the scaffold. The committee shuddered, for artists are kindly people, the act of accusation was torn up, and Boilly, to whom all, through my persuasion, rendered justice, was sent for to receive the expression of their esteem and regret."

Herault de Séchelles presented a new ultra republican constitution to the Convention. It was adopted, and a grand fête was celebrated in its honour on August 10th.[1] The constitution was utterly impracticable, and was suspended until the country should be at peace. The Revolution was in extreme danger. Her troops were being defeated on the frontiers and in the provinces. A *levée en masse* of all citizens between eighteen and twenty-five was ordered, the rich were required to provide money and food. Men who were too old to serve, women and children, were to work at home for the needs of the soldiers. All France was to be a vast camp, and Paris a vast

[1] This constitution of 1793 was loudly demanded by the Revolutionists in 1795, but never enforced.

prison. The existing prisons were not enough, many buildings, among others the Luxembourg, were therefore converted to this purpose. A *loi des suspects* was passed, it is a wonder that any one escaped being included in it. "All nobles are suspects," said Barrère, "all courtiers, all lawyers, all priests, all bankers, foreigners, stockbrokers, all who have complained of the actions of the Revolution, all those who deplore our successes."

The wives and children of suspects were included in the proscription. Domiciliary visits were again enforced to continue in the night as well as the day. Every householder was to post up on his walls the names of all his lodgers. All who had not a certificate of "civisme" were "suspects." Every member of the popular Assemblies was to have forty sous a day to induce him to attend the sections. The "maximum"—a fixed price for provisions — was rigorously enforced, and every French person who refused to take "assignats" in payment was imprisoned. Every emigrant, every "suspect," every victim of the guillotine was to forfeit his property to the nation, a good way of filling the exchequer. Soon to possess any money was to become "suspect." A revolutionary army was raised to scour the country in flying columns, accompanied by a tribunal and a guillotine, "to pluck up all germs of federalism, royalism and fanaticism." The cruelties practised by these commissioners surpassed in horror the deeds of the Septembriseurs. The conquered obtained no quarter. The unsuccessful generals were sent to Paris and judged by the Revolutionary Tribunal. On the 10th October, St. Just obtained a decree "that the whole executive government, the council, the Ministers, the Generals should be put under the surveillance of the Committee of public safety." A General knew that he must gain victories or mount

the scaffold. The Committee shrank from no means, was troubled by no scruples. Its energy was ultimately crowned with success.[1]

The people were growing impatient for the blood of its victims. It was represented that the expenses of the prisoners in the Temple were much too heavy. They were cut down to what was strictly necessary, and the Queen was removed to the Conciergerie to await her trial, confined in one of the horrid cells described by Sergent, and never lost sight of by her jailers. She maintained her stern dignity throughout her trial, when the most impossible and infamous crimes were laid to her charge; Hébert was the chief accuser. She heard her sentence in silence. She had been deprived of all that made life of any value—her husband murdered, her little son torn from her and given to the custody of the infamous shoemaker Simon, to be maltreated and corrupted, her sister-in-law and only other child in prison, awaiting probably a fate similar to her own. She was carried in a common tumbril to the place of execution. She showed emotion only once when she looked towards the Tuileries. She gave Sanson a letter containing a touching adieu to Madame Elizabeth which was never delivered. By mid-day on Tuesday the 16th October all was over. The once beautiful head fell on the scaffold, and the people shouted, "*Vive la République*," as enthusiastically as they had eighteen years before welcomed the fair young Princess to her adopted country.

The twenty-two members of the Gironde soon

[1] Among the guillotined were Dillon, Custine, Biron, Luckner, Westermann, and many others of all parties. Lafayette and Dumouriez had the good fortune to escape; the one was in prison, and the other, after his escape, spent the remainder of his life in England. Pitt gave him a pension; some French writers attribute the victories of Wellington to his advice.

followed. They defended themselves vigorously, and the trial lasted long. On the sixth day Hébert came at the head of a deputation to hurry the jury. The foreman obediently declared that they were satisfied of the guilt of the prisoners, who could hardly believe in the verdict. Valazé stabbed himself on the spot.

It is a relief that recent writers discredit the story told in Lamartine's fine epic of the Girondins' last supper, and the levity displayed by them. In spite of their avowed disbelief, twelve of them confessed to a priest, who was edified by their repentance. They met their fate courageously. True to their republican principles they sang the Marseillaise to the foot of the scaffold, and cried, "*Vive la République*," in response to the shouts of the populace. So vindictive were their enemies that the head of Valazé was severed from his dead body. Sergent had nothing to do with these executions; he says—

[1] "M. Sergent took no part in the proceedings against Marie Antoinette, he could prove on the testimony of many persons that he objected to her being brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal as well as to her execution. He repeated constantly that she ought to be sent back to her family. It was nevertheless his opinion that she had been the counsellor of all the mysterious and mischievous plots against the nation, being, as every one said, the soul of the Austrian Committee.

"On the day of the execution of the Girondins he would not sit in the Convention, nor on the next day. Many of his friends heard him say, 'It is impossible for me to take my place! I see a yawning

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847.

abyss which will necessarily swallow up other victims.' Besides, he rendered justice to many who had perished, saying that they were honest and incorruptible republicans."

The soul of the Gironde, the heroic Madame Roland, was removed to the Conciergerie a fortnight after Marie Antoinette had left its fetid cells. Two of her companions in captivity, Beugnot and Riouffe, have told us how her lofty spirit bore her above her cruel fate, of her still brilliant conversation, her undiminished beauty, and of her gracious sympathy with the unfortunate women around her. As Sergent says, "she mounted the scaffold like a queen ascending her throne." Her husband could not bear to survive her. He left the friends who were concealing him that he might not compromise them, and was found run through the body on a public highway. Another victim, as great a contrast to Madame Roland as one could find, the wretched Egalité, Duke of Orleans, perished in this month of November, sensual and careless to the last.

During this time, Sergent says that he was living in extreme retirement, in a little house of three storeys in the Rue des Poitevins. He occupied the Troisiême. The President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, Hermand, lived underneath him, yet he says he did not find this out till long afterwards. Until they were imprisoned, two of the Girondins (he does not say which) used to come to see him in the evening. Other society, except that of Emira, he had none. He spoke occasionally in the Convention to point out some of the abuses in the law of maximum, to urge the enforcement of literary property, to defend Bouchotte and Rossignol, to support the new calendar, to ask for changes in the rules and the members of different committees, for

guarantees for the safety of the National Archives; but never once joined in the sanguinary proceedings which were disgracing the Republic. He published afterwards, in the *Journal de Paris*, a declaration defying any one to say that he had carried a single accusation before the Revolutionary Tribunal. His vindictive feelings appear to have been satisfied by the death of Louis XVI.

By way of showing independence of old superstition, the most revolting scenes took place in the Assembly. Sergent entirely disapproved of them.

[1] "My opinion of the Catholic Religion is that of a free and independent thinker, but I was the first, the only deputy who objected to letters being read from priests announcing that they repudiated the functions which they had falsely professed to hold sacred. (See the *Moniteur* for 7th November, the sitting in which the Bishop of Paris, Gobel, renounced his title.) I protested against the disgusting scenes repeated at the Bar of the Convention when the spoils of the churches were brought in, and I demanded the arrest of the Curé Parens, when he drank off the wine with which he had filled a chalice—I said that he was turning the senate into a tavern. I also raised my voice against the ridiculous mania of listening for hours together to the songs of deputations, converting the Convention into a Théâtre de Vaudeville. Only the strength of Danton could turn out these mountebanks. It is as well to remark that the actors in these scandalous scenes were never the patriots who had sacrificed fortune, pleasure, rank,

[1] Memoir written in 1801.

and even risked their lives for the Revolution. The offenders were men who had cried in turn, *Vive le Roi! Vive Lafayette! Vive Pétion! Vive Robespierre! À bas le Veto! À bas le Cheval Blanc!*[1] *À bas la Montagne!*"

Bailly, Barnave, Manuel, Osselin, soon followed the other victims to the scaffold. On the day that Bailly died, the first Feast of Reason was celebrated. The goddess (Madame Momoro, once an actress) was borne aloft in a palanquin surrounded by a tribe of rioters of both sexes into the Convention, embraced by the President and other dignitaries, and seated in state by their side. Great was the enthusiasm. The carmagnole was danced in triumph, many of the deputies came down from their seats to join in the revelry. The procession went on to Notre Dame, and deposited the goddess on the high altar. The service of worship consisting of hymns and harangues was then performed.

It must have been a great relief to Sergent when he was sent into the provinces with the peaceable commission of collecting works of art for the gallery of the Louvre. He was accompanied by his colleague Périer and joined by Emira, who at this time first received this name (an anagram of her real name Marie), conferred on her by the municipality of Chartres, while that of Androphile was bestowed on Sergent. They reached Chartres in December, 1793, or, according to the new calendar,[2] the month Nivôse. A day or two after their arrival, Sergent announced

[1] The horse of Lafayette.

[2] The Republic dated from the 21st September, 1792, the day when the Convention opened; the object was to remove all trace of old superstitions. In the place of Sunday there was to be a *fête* in honour of reason, liberty, and equality, every tenth day. *Décadi.*

to the conseil generale of Eure et Loire the brilliant victory of Mans won by General Marceau, which for the time broke the strength of the rebels (as they were called) of *La Vendée.* A letter of congratulation was addressed to the young general, "born within their walls," by the municipality of Chartres. In a memoir of his brother-in-law, Sergent writes that Marceau was horrified at the atrocities committed by his army.

"The streets, the houses, the public squares, all were covered by dead bodies; the victors appeared never to have sufficiently gorged themselves with blood. Marceau was cut to the heart by this abuse of victory, but could not put a stop to it, till at last he ordered the 'Générale' to be beaten. He was ill for some time afterwards, and entreated to be sent to the frontier, to be employed no more in civil war. He wrote to his sister, 'It is too painful for me to fight against Frenchmen, I will not stay here, I wish to fight against foreign enemies; it is only in such wars that honour and glory are to be won. You expect me to bring back laurels, they would fill you with horror, for they are stained with human blood.'"[1]

The fine cathedral of Chartres was being transformed into a "Temple de la Raison." The first celebration was to be on the following Décadi. Sergent was able to stop the vandalism which would have destroyed the painted glass, pictures, and statues, representing saints, kings, and patriarchs, and the objects of Christian worship. He argued that modern nations would have sustained an immense loss if all

[1] *Notices Historiques sur le Général Marçeau. Publiées par Sergent Marceau*, Milan 1820.

the representations of Greek and Roman mythology had been destroyed. He also preserved the organ, as calculated to elevate the mind in the new *fêtes*.[1] We shall think he went far enough. The bas reliefs in the choir were to be replaced by brass tablets commemorating the glorious days of the Republic. *Conquest of the Bastille*, 1789. *Treachery of Louis. Flight to Varennes*, 1791. *Punishment of the last tyrant, Jan. 21st*, 1793. *Conspiracy against Unity, 31st May*, 1793, *&c.* The statue of Humanity was to be transformed into Equality, that of Religion to be adorned with a pike and cap, and called Liberty; Hope into Commerce. A large chest was to stand in a retired corner, with a statue of Truth over it. In this chest were to be deposited secret denunciations against public men, and of other citizens against each other, of all kinds of vices, crimes, and offences against morality, to be referred on the first décadi in the month to a council of ten ancients. Virtue was then to be rewarded by this council, and vice punished, but if the offence were not against law, public disapproval was to be a sufficient punishment.[2] Sergent innocently remarks that curiosity was sure to attract crowds to this ceremony.

Sergent has been accused of having given a ball in the cathedral, but he absolutely denies the fact; he was not even in Chartres at the time.[3] He speaks with satisfaction of the principles he advocated.

[4] "The citizens of Chartres paid me the compliment of asking me to preside over their *Société Populaire*. I demanded the freedom of Touraille, I suppressed

[1] The whole report is so curious that I have put it into the appendix. I am indebted for it, as well as for a great many other particulars, to M. Noël Parfait's pamphlet on Sergent.

[2] See appendix.

[3] Introduction to Sergent's *Historical Notes*, p. 4.

[4] Memoir written in 1801.

a number of fresh accusations. Two commissioners from the Convention heard me inculcate union, reconciliation, and indulgence, for those who had lost fortune, rank, and pensions by the revolution could not be expected to show great attachment to its principles. I said this while the 'terror' was steeling every heart. I was speaking in a country where a rich, devout proprietor and a prince had attached many of the inhabitants. As long as I was there no arrests took place. In Corbeil and Brie, while the judicial assassinations were going on, many fugitives were hiding in the fields in the costume of Sansculottes, not one was arrested by my orders."

Sergent returned to Paris towards the end of January, 1794, and found the wild dance of death still going on; but both Danton and Robespierre were for different reasons getting tired of the excesses of the Commune.

Danton had married a young wife, and liked nothing better than to retire with her to his house at Arcis-sur-Aube. The obstacle to all measures of clemency was Hébert, who imagined himself the successor of Marat, and longed to get rid of Robespierre and Danton, and to reign over the sovereign people. He already dictated to the Commune; Pache, and Chaumette, whose substitute he was, both yielded to his despotic will. His filthy paper, the *Père Duchesne,* was popular among the lowest populace, as was also his defiance of all religion, order, and morality; and he had a powerful following in the Jacobins and Cordeliers. The Jacobin club had greatly deteriorated, Sergent says,—

[1] "In 1794 the Jacobin club became a pestilent den.

[1] Introduction to *Historical Notes.*

Some of the members rejected in 1791 were re-admitted, such as Bourdon de l'Oise, sent afterwards to die at Sinnamary; the ill-famed attorney, now celebrated in history, Fouquier Tinville, public accuser of the Revolutionary Tribunal; Hébert turned out of the Théâtre des Variétés (editor of the *Père Duchesne*); the ex-monk Chaumette, Procureur of the Commune, who denied the existence of a God; Ronsin, a clerk at one of the Barriers of Paris, who was put at the head of the National Guard when the Girondins were arrested. I mention only names which have unfortunately become notorious in history. I never had anything in common with these men, and I never felt disposed to offer my hand to any one of them."

Robespierre, who added hypocrisy to his other vices, was shocked by Hébert's scandalous profanity, and he resolved to get rid of him. Hébert gave him the opportunity by bringing one of his disgraceful processions of men and women, bearing the spoils of the Churches into the Convention, and afterwards into the Jacobins, and following up the performance by a speech, in which he said that he had been told that Robespierre and Danton wanted to arrest him. He went on to demand the death of all the accomplices of the Gironde still in prison, and of the sister of Louis XVI. Momoro (husband of the goddess of Reason) asked for the extermination of all priests. Robespierre replied in a crushing speech, elevating religion, law, and morality. "Atheism is aristocratic," he said, "the idea of a Supreme Being protecting innocence and punishing vice is entirely democratic." He accused the Commune of degrading the Republic,

and asked for the purification of the Jacobins. Accordingly, each of the leading members of the club had to undergo a severe examination.

Danton rose to defend himself against the charges of ambition and corruption. He was coldly received, but Robespierre supported him as well as Camille Desmoulins, they were reserved for a future occasion. Since the death of the Girondins, Camille's pen had been silent, but horrified at the tyranny and barbarity of the *Comité de Salut Public*, he had recently started the *Vieux Cordelier*, in which he lashed with ridicule the *Loi des suspects* and advocated the formation of a *Comité de Clemence*. Robespierre appeared to approve, reserving to himself the privilege of disavowing Camille when it should be convenient, and in the mean time rejoiced in the discomfiture of Hébert, who was jealous of the success of the *Vieux Cordelier* (the only rival to his own delectable paper), and had the imprudence on March 7th to stir up the Cordeliers to insurrection. He hoped to enact a second 31st of May; his proposals were received with enthusiasm, and he thought himself safe. Nevertheless on the 15th, the *Enragés*, as the Hébertists were called, were suddenly cast into prison.

For three weeks Robespierre had been confined to his house by a slight illness. Sergent was a member of the commission for investigating the papers relating to the accused. He disapproved of their execution, as part of the prevalent sanguinary system to which he expected a violent reaction. The crimes laid to their charge were oppression of the Convention, and, through that, oppression of the nation. They were found guilty, executed on the 24th, and insulted by the mob on their way to the scaffold. They behaved with the utmost pusillanimity.

The *Enragés* were disposed of. It was now the turn of the *Indulgents*.

For a long time the relations between Robespierre and Danton had been strained, and the fall of the Hébertists warned Sergent that other victims of Robespierre's jealousy would soon follow.

[1] "This presentiment came true, for Danton, the colossus who supported like Atlas the Revolution on his shoulders, who by his energy and eloquence had taken the place of the celebrated Mirabeau, and had been falsely accused of corruption and of greed, became the hated rival of Robespierre.

"A short time before his arrest, he said to Robespierre at a supper given by Panis, for the purpose of reconciling them, 'Has the Revolutionary Tribunal been suppressed, that fatal tribunal of blood? Are the scaffolds to be left standing much longer? What do *you* wish, Robespierre?' The latter answered him contemptuously, 'Do you think the time has come for removing them?' The act of accusation drawn up by Amar calls him the 'Chief of the Indulgents,' and this man, who at an earlier epoch was accused of ordering the massacres of September, was now brought before the Tribunal as an Indulgent."

In his notes on the *Souvenirs d'un demi-siècle*, Sergent writes—

"It has often been said that Danton sold himself, that he stole from the exchequer, and that he became very rich. Is there any proof of this? Have any facts been cited, have the means by which he obtained

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847. The story is told with further details on page 310.

this wealth been discovered? Have any letters been found containing confessions to his accomplices, for he must have had accomplices to make such an immense fortune. Is there any proof of his enormous expenditure, of his extraordinary and insulting luxury, of the scandalously sumptuous salons of his two wives? No, he was long known to be living in the *Cour de Commerce*, in a modest lodging of which neither he nor his estimable wife were ashamed. This pious, charitable woman led a very retired life on their small means, she received only two or three female friends. Danton respected her virtues, left her all the management of their small establishment, and his passionate nature submitted willingly to the calm reason of his companion, who was contented with the esteem of her husband. He lamented her death very sincerely. Danton left the Hotel of the Minister of Justice to return to his simple apartment in the *Cour de Commerce*, having no other prospect than rest from his revolutionary labours under the paternal roof at *Arcis-sur-Aube*. It was not a château, reader, you may believe me; perhaps you will not be inclined to do so in these latter days when you have seen Ministers retire under such brilliant circumstances, although they ran no risk of losing their heads. Danton lost his, and you know that he, the strong man, was seen to shed tears at the foot of the scaffold, when thinking of his young and interesting second wife, who was worthy of succeeding to his first. You, who accuse this incorruptible patriot of

all the excesses of the Revolution, you, blind historians who only echo the accusations of the enemies of the Revolution, who to render their declamations more striking, have painted him with the face of a tiger, did you know him personally? you copied this revolting portrait from one of the bad engravings which were sold on the quays for four sous. One month before his arrest, he said at a supper in honour of Robespierre, 'Are the scaffolds to be permanent throughout France?' 'Do you think the time is come to remove them?' was the dry reply of the head of the Committee for Public Safety. Danton, who had risen from his chair to draw near to Robespierre, returned to his place with tears in his eyes. Danton joined Camille Desmoulins in producing the *Vieux Cordelier*, in which they attacked, with all the wit and power of which Camille was master, the *loi des suspects.* Nothing equal to it had appeared during the whole time of the Revolution. Lastly, the shameful act of accusation drawn up by the ex-ennobled, ex-secretary of the king—Amar—designated Danton as the chief of the *Indulgents.* If this Danton were such a monster, would he have perished because he wished to abolish the dreadful system of Terror?"

The attempt at reconciliation having failed, Danton and Camille were advised by their friends to fly. But nothing could persuade Danton that he was in serious danger. "No one would dare to touch me," he said. Besides, had not he and Robespierre been firm friends all through the Revolution? And Camille also could not believe in the enmity of Robes-

pierre, who had joined the hands of his beloved Lucile and himself in marriage, and had hung over the cradle of their infant. It is said that Robespierre hesitated, or, at any rate, only appeared to yield, to the superior audacity of St. Just and Couthon.

Early on April 1st, Paris was astounded to hear that Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Philippeaux, Lacroix, and Fabre d'Eglantine had been arrested and carried to the Luxembourg.

At six in the morning the gendarmes knocked at the door of Danton, and presented him with the order of the fatal committee. "They *have* dared then!" he exclaimed, and at the same hour Camille Desmoulins was torn from the arms of his wife. "I am condemned for having pitied the victims," he said to her. "If I die my only regret will be that I could not save them." But Lucile would not tamely submit. She ran to ask the wife of Danton to join in an appeal to Robespierre; but although only seventeen years old, Madame Danton carried republican stoicism to an extreme. "No, never," she said, "will I consent to degrade the name I bear!" Lucile wrote a touching appeal to the tyrant, conjuring him by their old intimacy to save her husband. This letter was not suffered to reach Robespierre.

Legendre was one of Danton's greatest friends. He endeavoured to defend him in the Convention, and asked that he should not be taken before the Revolutionary Tribunal until the Convention had heard his defence. This would not have suited Robespierre, who entered the hall while Legendre was speaking. Robespierre stripped off the mask of hypocrisy, and made a violent attack on the accused, crushing Legendre, who muttered a few words of apology.

Danton's behaviour was wanting in dignity. He blustered before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and vociferated all day long before the bars of his prison,

hoping to excite all within earshot to rouse the people. His energy, his powerful voice, his demand to be confronted with the committees, moved the audience more powerfully than the Tribunal expected or approved, and they endeavoured to find some excuse for cutting short the trial. Meanwhile Camille spent his time in weeping and writing to his Lucile, who came with her mother, and sat for hours in the garden of the Luxembourg, where they used to wander in the early days of their happiness, opposite to the cell in which her husband was confined. She had not given up the hope of saving him. His friend, General Dillon, also imprisoned in the Luxembourg, sent word to her that he and other prisoners, among whom were Laflotte and Chaumette, were in correspondence with some citizens outside, and that if she could put together some 1000 francs to scatter among the people and rouse the populace by her grief, her youth, and her beauty, a rescue might be effected, the Committees defeated, and the Dantonists ride in triumph over their enemies. Laflotte had the baseness to betray this conspiracy. It gave the Tribunal the opportunity for which they were seeking to put an end to the trial.

Legendre also was anxious to atone for his imprudence in supporting the falling party, and with the utmost baseness gave a letter from Lucile to Billaud Varennes.

Sergent continues the account I have already quoted from,—

"All the accomplices of Danton are not before the tribunal," said the savage Billaud Varennes, crumpling in his hands a paper. It was a letter from the beautiful and heroical wife of Camille Desmoulins to Legendre, which he had the baseness to carry to the

Committee of Public Safety. In it she said that in order to save his friends, Legendre and six other deputies whom she named, and who had great influence over the people (I am proud to say that I was one), must ask to be called as witnesses before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and thus arouse a strong feeling in favour of the accused. This letter caused the death of all the accused and of this brave woman, who did not care to survive her husband. She added that General Dillon, who was among the accused, had sent her some money to distribute among certain patriots, who would mingle with the crowd outside and inside the hall of audience, and intimidate the assassins, who called themselves judges. This letter was found among the records of the Committee on the 9th Thermidor. I held it in my hands."

Lucile was arrested, and the next day the prisoners were condemned without further delay. To the last, Camille Desmoulins could not believe that Robespierre would suffer him to perish. He made frantic appeals to the populace all the way to the scaffold, reproved by Danton, who had regained his self-possession. The shutters of the house Robespierre occupied in the Rue St. Honoré were closed, he shuddered when he heard the shouts of the people, deriding their former idols, as the tumbrils clattered through the street. A very different victim was soon to pass along that dreary road;—the saintly princess Elizabeth. She preserved her royal dignity and Christian resignation to the last. When asked her name at the Tribunal, she replied, "Elizabeth de France, aunt of the present king, and sister of the monarch you murdered." As if to mock her station, the victims on that day were

chosen from the very flower of the French noblesse. "She may imagine she is at Versailles," said the wretched Fouquier Tinville. After her condemnation she tried to console those who were to die with her, inspiring them with the piety and courage which had enabled her to disregard the transitory pleasures as well as the sufferings of this life. Even the ribald crowd was silenced by the sight of so much innocence and fortitude. She was to suffer last, and one by one she embraced her companions as they mounted the scaffold.

[1] "Sergent disapproved of the execution of the sister of Louis XVI., of whom he spoke with great respect, as a virtuous princess. If he had had to pronounce judgment on her, he would have acquitted her on the count of sending her diamonds to the emigrant princes, her brothers, for in so doing she performed only a duty to her family."

Almost all the men of whom, in the beginning of the Revolution, France had reason to be proud, for the sake of their talents or their virtues, were now either exiled, proscribed, imprisoned or murdered. The government had fallen into vicious and incompetent hands. With the exception of Robespierre and Carnot, there was scarcely one of whom it might be said that he was worthy or capable of governing, and Carnot almost entirely devoted himself to the conduct of the war. This only can explain the horrible tyranny and cruelty of the Reign of Terror. As Sergent said, "There can be no real harmony (*solidarité*) among rascals." Barrère, Collot, Billaud, and their followers envied Robespierre and his aides de camp, St. Just and Couthon. The two latter had no scruples.

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847.

Robespierre was beginning to feel that if he was to aspire to supreme power, some appearance of religion must be restored. A *fête* in honour of *l'Être suprême* was celebrated on June 8th. It was a mixture of profanity and absurdity. Robespierre as President of the Convention acted the part of Pontiff and set fire to a pasteboard representation of Atheism. A figure of Wisdom rose up in its place, then Robespierre offered up a prayer. The Convention headed by the Pontiff now moved to the *Champ-de-Mars*, preceded by an Olympian car, drawn by eight oxen; shepherds and shepherdesses in white rode in it; hymns were sung in honour of the Divinity. Robespierre was dressed with unusual care—even for him—in a sky-blue coat and white silk waistcoat embroidered with silver.[1] His countenance was radiant.

Sergent says,—

[2] "I walked behind Robespierre in this ceremony to observe his demeanour and judge of the effect he produced on the people. After it was over I dined with Madame Larive, wife of the celebrated actor, then in prison, at the Gros Caillou. I said to Madame Chessel, an actress at the *Français*, whose husband had been a friend of Danton: 'Robespierre, when he stepped down from the Patriotic altar to-day, set his foot unconsciously on the first step of the scaffold!' After the 9th Thermidor, that lady said to me, 'I did not believe in your prophecy, I did not

[1] He and the rest of the Convention carried huge bouquets. Many years after, at Nice, a friend of Sergent's found in a drawer in his room a faded nosegay. Sergent shuddered at the sight. It was the one he carried on that day.

[2] Notes on Béliard. I do not know what this history is.

think that our friends and Lucile Desmoulins would so soon be avenged.' "

Robespierre had committed the blunder of making himself ridiculous as well as dangerous in the eyes of his colleagues. Two days after he had been proclaiming the existence of a Benevolent Creator he presented to the Convention a project for increasing the power of the Revolutionary Tribunal.[1] It was to be divided into four courts. The prisoners were no longer to have advocates, the juries were to convict without examining witnesses, upon any proof which they might deem sufficient. Death was to be the penalty in every case. Between the 10th June and the 27th July (the 9th Thermidor) 1400 victims perished.[2]

Fouquier Tinville proposed to erect a guillotine in a hall adjoining the Tribunal, and to dispatch five hundred in a day. But this was too much for the stomachs of the Convention. Prisoners were executed in batches, often without any warrant, in order to make up the number. The citizens who lived on the road to the place of execution complained of the noise of the tumbrils, and the guillotine was erected on the site of the Bastille, afterwards at the Barrière du Trone, and brought back to the Place de la Révolution for the first time, with a sort of horrible irony, on the 10th Thermidor.

Robespierre absented himself from the committees, yet the executions went on more furiously than ever. The three committees vied with each other, each believing that any relaxation in the system of terror would be seized as an excuse by the other two for sending their rivals to the scaffold. All looked with

[1] This was called the law of the 22nd Prairial.

[2] An excellent short account of this period will be found in the *Student's France.*

suspicion on the triumvirs, Robespierre, Couthon, and St. Just. The latter attempted to dictate to Carnot, to whose genius the army of France was owing its splendid successes, and who joined the confederacy against the triumvirs.

[1] "Sergent was warned by his colleague Courtois that his name was in a list of deputies who were to be arrested, and he in turn warned Rewbell (afterwards a member of the directory), who was lounging on the Terrace of the Tuileries. Sergent took refuge in a little house he had in the environs of Paris, and while he cultivated his flowers, awaited his fate. Some of the committee, however, determined to withdraw two of the names. 'Well then,' said the impulsive Vadier, 'there shall not be one left,' and he angrily tore up the fatal paper. All this took place a week before Robespierre's death."

Robespierre spent the next few days in wandering about the country round Paris, wrapped in thought. The excesses of Barrère, Tallien and others, were revolting to him. These men went to the daily executions as to a pleasant lounge, made them the subjects of their ribald jests, and generally ended the day with disgraceful orgies. To rid the world of such people, he thought would be a public benefit, and then when all aristocrats, all who were opposed to the Republic, and also to his will and pleasure, had fallen, he, Robespierre, would inaugurate universal peace, virtue and brotherhood; but first he had a task before him from which he shrank.

On the 26th July (8th Thermidor) he suddenly reappeared in the tribune of the Convention, and

[1] Memoir dictated in 1847.

delivered a long address, denouncing the plots in the committees, and even in the heart of the Convention, the remedy being to purify them and establish the Unity of Government. He defended the executions of the Hébertists and Dantonists. "Did not these men deserve to die?" he asked. He went further. He ventured to attack the living for oppression and corruption. It was a speech that it would have been safe to make only with a strong armed force at his back. Lemaitre moved that it should be printed, but the Assembly over which Robespierre had lost his influence, negatived the proposal.[1] He went over to the Jacobins where he was still powerful. Meanwhile his enemies were preparing for war.

The Convention met at nine on the following morning. St. Just tried to speak, but was silenced by Billaud and Tallien, who drew forth a dagger with which he announced that he was prepared to strike Robespierre to the heart if the Convention was too cowardly to arrest him. Robespierre tried in vain to obtain a hearing. His voice was choked with emotion.

"It is the blood of Danton that stifles him!" said Garnier. In the midst of the prevailing tumult the arrest of Robespierre, St. Just, and Couthon was decreed. The younger Robespierre and Lebas claimed to share their fate. Henriot, the commandant of the Civic Guard, was arrested at the same time. The accused were confined in separate prisons. The Commune roused the sections and released Henriot, who at the head of a strong force set the five prisoners at liberty. The Convention issued a decree of outlawry against them, Barras commanded the troops. At midnight he and his battalions surrounded the Hotel de Ville where the accused had taken refuge. When the gendarmes appeared, the younger Robes-

[1] It was printed after Robespierre's death. It filled forty octavo pages.

pierre threw himself out of the window and broke his leg, Lebas shot himself, and Robespierre tried to follow his example, but succeeded only in fracturing his jaw.[1] Although he retained consciousness he never spoke again. He was taken with the rest and laid on a table in a room in the Tuileries. His sufferings were terrible. The prisoners were carried to the Conciergerie, identified by Fouquier Tinville, and executed in the afternoon. Shouts and curses attended them, the streets were thronged. The Sovereign people who, Robespierre had so often declared, could do no wrong, followed them with the foulest abuse. The gendarmes pointed to Robespierre as he lay in agonies on the floor of the tumbril, and the women danced round the cart which halted for a minute before his lodgings, reproaching him with the murder of their husbands, fathers and children. The guillotine was re-erected that day in the Place de la Revolution. When the head of Robespierre was held up, the rabble shouted, "*A bas le Tyran, Vive la République!*" as they had done a year and a half earlier at the execution of Louis XVI.

[1] Some say that Robespierre was shot by Bourdon de l'Oise. Berryer, in his memoirs, says that he was standing in the Battalion of his section in front of the hall-door of the Hotel de Ville, and that he saw Bourdon rush up the staircase with a pistol in each hand, and a dagger in his mouth, his eyes gleaming, looking like a fiend.

CHAPTER XII.

1794—1801.

Reaction—Close of the Jacobin Club—*Jeunesse Dorée*—Attacks on the Convention—Famine—12th Germinal—1st Prairial—Review of Sergent's opinions and conduct—Harsh Measures—Reactionary Cruelties—The Monster Pitt—Sergent suspected—He escapes to Chartres—13th Vendémiaire—Coblentz—Marriage—Death of Marceau—Incidents in his career—M. and Madame Sergent return to Paris—Change in the Government—The Directory—Bonaparte—Sergent appointed Superintendent of Military Hospitals—Again suspected—Official Reports—Infernal Machine—Sergent arrested—Exile.

THE Reign of Terror was practically over, but the ground-swell which follows a storm continued for some time longer. Twenty-one victims suffered on the same day with Robespierre, seventy on the next; altogether a hundred and fourteen were condemned and executed in the three days which followed his death. The Convention was divided in two parties. The members of the committees, the commissioners to the provinces, the remnant of Robespierre's following and of the *Enragés* now formed the Left; while the remains of the *Modérés* and the *Indulgents* joined those members of the Montagne who had disapproved of the system of Terror and formed a strong party called the *Thermidorien*. This majority proceeded to institute salutary reforms. Among the measures introduced was the foundation of normal schools. Sergent proposed an amendment extending the period of study to a year instead of four months.

He continued to devote himself chiefly to the committees of education, science, and art, which instituted the *conservatoires* of which Paris is justly proud.

A strong reaction against the *Terreur* now set in. Upwards of ten thousand "suspects" were set free, and Robespierre's law of the twenty-second Prairial was abolished. Fréron, a leading Thermidorien, organized a band of young men who called themselves the *Jeunesse Dorée*, or *Muscadins*, and chiefly frequented the Palais Royal. They wore a ridiculous dress, *à la Victime*, and devoted themselves to punishing the Jacobins. They had their hymn, *Le réveil du Peuple*, which they sang about the streets, often coming into collision with the *sans-culottes* shouting the Marseillaise. On the 11th November the *Muscadins* broke open the hall of the celebrated club, turned out the members, and shut it up for ever. It richly deserved its fate.

The committees of *Salut Public* and *Sureté Générale* were entirely remodelled and their powers much restrained, also the Revolutionary Tribunal was reorganized on the lines advocated by Camille Desmoulins in his proposal for a *Comité de Clémence*—which cost him his life.

Carrier and Lebon suffered death for their atrocious conduct in La Vendée and Lyons; seventy-three members who had protested against the arrest of the Girondins were recalled, and the survivors of the leading Girondists, Louvet, Lanjuinais, Isnard, Larévillière-Lépeaux and others, twenty-two in number, were restored to their seats in the Convention. A few days afterwards Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, Barrère, and Vadier were arrested.

Sergent over and over again expresses his conviction of the cruelty of these men; and yet he supported Carnot who, moved by a feeling of loyalty to his old associates, tried to soften the Convention in their

favour. The wretch Fouquier Tinville at length was tried by his own Tribunal and met the just punishment of his atrocities.

The *Jeunesse Dorée* and the mob were constantly fighting. The poor again were suffering as they had been at intervals ever since the outbreak of the Revolution, from famine, insecurity, and want of work. As in former days they were indignant at the luxury of the Court, they now viewed with envy and vexation the wild frenzy of dissipation and gaiety exhibited by the rich—a reaction from the terror and gloom of the preceding year. There were balls *à la Victime;* to gain admission to them it was necessary to have lost a relation by the guillotine. Madame Tallien led this portion of society, and was almost as much hated by the poor as Marie Antoinette had been in her day. The rules of religion and morality ceased to exist. Divorce was prevalent for the most trifling causes. The law of maximum was evaded by the shops keeping two sets of goods; one openly displayed, very bad, and sold at a low price, while another and better kind was secretly offered at a high price, and sold to the rich. Republican simplicity was only for those who could afford nothing better. The Sovereign People felt itself deposed, and in its exasperation resolved upon a new insurrection. Several abortive attempts were made before that of the 20th May, when the mob was finally vanquished.

Sergent says—

[1] "The famine gave the opportunity for an outbreak. Commissioners were ordered to beat the drums about the streets, summoning the citizens to send their crusts and candle-ends to the prisons

[1] From the fragment, *À mon delateur.*

and hospitals. These scandalous proclamations aroused the market-people, who cried, 'The rascals! to order us to give our crusts to the prisoners while we are being starved!' I told Sieyès, at that time member of the *Salut Public*, of this singular order. He did not know who could have issued it, for the Convention had already arranged for supplying the hospitals and prisons with food. An hour afterwards I met him coming from the Committee of *Sureté Générale*. 'I have just been denouncing this iniquity,' he said; 'I have been talking to them for the last hour, and begging the committee to discover the perpetrators. No one answered. I do not believe that they heard me.'"

An outbreak took place on March 19th (27th Ventôse). The mob came to the Convention to ask for bread; their orator made an insolent speech; the president sent them about their business; the *Comité de Sureté Générale* gave orders to some battalions of the sections to support the *Jeunesse Dorée*, and the crowd was soon dispersed. The Convention in consequence ordered the deputies to receive arms.

Sergent says—

[1] "The Committee ordered small swords to be distributed to the members; I was charged with this duty, and remained at the *Comité d'Inspection* till late. I also ordered soup for the President Boissy d'Anglas. I did not return to the Convention until it was nearly empty. I was stopped and hustled in the Cour du Manège, and I was in such a state that

[1] Memoir, written in 1801.

no one could suspect me of being a ringleader of the mob, for they had not spared me. On the next day a young officer appeared at the sitting of the Inspecteurs, asking for a deputy, Philippe Delville, who (he said) had seen him on the previous day, although wounded (his arm was in a sling), defending several deputies, who would bear witness to his pistols having been torn from him, and to his having been struck with his own sabre, which was broken, and he added that Delville had promised to furnish him with arms. One of the members refused rudely, and was in vain called to order by the President. I saw that the officer, who did not venture to reply, was moved by sorrow and indignation. He pointed to his wound, tears sprang to his eyes. He was close to me. I took his hand. 'Come to me to-morrow, excellent young man,' I said, 'I will give you my own sword. It will be well placed in your hands, for you have shown a fine sense of honour and a feeling heart, and I shall rejoice in repairing the gratuitous insult to which you have been subjected.' He was leaving the room, but the President called him back, and every one disputed the honour of arming him."

The scarcity was real, and all classes were put upon rations, to the disgust of the poor. This measure was proposed by Boissy d'Anglas, who in consequence was nicknamed "Boissy Famine."

Sergent writes—

[1] "I wish to let the French nation know that I

[1] Memoir, written in 1801.

shared the famine with the people. I ate only the food distributed by my section — bad bread and biscuit—and when that became still scarcer, I often gave up my share to the servants. I never made use of my power as a deputy for obtaining wood or candles to the detriment of the poor. I shared their fortunes, and often went without either.

Again, on the 1st Germinal, the mob invaded the Hall of the Tuileries, with a petition asking for the Constitution of 1793. The Convention did not venture to repudiate the ultimate adoption of that impracticable measure. After a stormy discussion, Legendre proposed a committee of eleven to work incessantly at the formation of the laws which of necessity must accompany the Constitution. This satisfied the people; most of them left the Assembly to quarrel in the gardens with the *Jeunesse Dorée* and the sections summoned by the *Comité de Sureté Générale.* In the evening Sieyès proposed a *grande mesure de Police*, a sort of martial law, to protect the Convention against these onslaughts. It was opposed by the Montagne, but Sergent rose up to defend it.

He writes—

[1] "Sieyès proposed in the name of the *Comité de Salut Public* a law against riotous gatherings. Some members asked for its adjournment. I, although a Montagnard, was the first to oppose the adjournment, and to speak in favour of the project."

The Montagne cried out, "It is a bloodthirsty law!" and some of them went into the gardens to tell the rioters of the measure. A tumult ensued, many

[1] Memoir, written in 1801.

fugitives rushed into the Assembly, crying that assassination was going on outside, and a large majority of the members voted for the immediate adoption of the law. The discussion continued until ten o'clock, when the law was finally passed.

On the 12th Germinal (April 1st) the Convention presided over by Boissy d'Anglas was deliberating on the means of increasing the supply of food, when the crowd again burst in with the old cry, "Bread and the Constitution of '93!" The rioters were armed with sticks, and they laid their blows freely about them on all who opposed their proceedings, usurping the seats of the members and putting a stop to the debate. Women and children now rushed in crying for "Bread, Bread!" At length some members of the Montagne succeeded in making themselves heard, and after a stormy scene the crowd were persuaded to return in order to allow the measures which they demanded to be discussed. The tocsin was sounding, and several battalions of the sections coming up dispersed the multitude. No sooner was the Assembly free, than it decreed that General Pichegru, who had just returned from a victorious campaign in Holland, should command the guard of the Convention with Barras as his *aide-de-camp*, and that the four terrorists, Barrère, Collot d'Herbois, Vadier, and Billaud Varennes should be immediately taken off to the Fortress of Ham. Seventeen other members of the expiring Montagne were arrested at the same time and sent to bear them company.

The starving people, however, were only instruments in the hands of the Revolutionists, who, frightened at the turn that affairs were taking, tried to bring back the palmy days of the Montagne. Sergent believed and announced from the tribune that the conspiracy against the Convention was the work of Pitt and his agents. He was immediately

put down as a charlatan by Thibeaudeau, who pointing to the remnant of the Montagne, said, "It is there that the minority who conspire are to be found."

Sergent writes—

[1] "I know that there are people who attribute to me as a crime that I accuse the ministers in London of instigating all our insurrections, and that I cannot see that the real authors and chiefs of these insurrections sat in the National Convention. I know that this opinion, acknowledged by me in the evening of the 12th Germinal, was the cause of my being called a charlatan, yet it was confirmed in the name of the *Comité de Salut Public* by the reporter, Merlin de Douai. I know that if I had been Pitt, with millions at my command for secret services of which I never need render any account to Parliament, I should have ordered the revolt of the 1st Prairial (20th of May), and that being the case, I was justified in accusing him. The Committee of Public Safety proved in the Assembly that the centre of operations was in Switzerland and in London, and that there was only an Executive in Paris.

"No one can deny the terrible position in which we stood on the 1st Prairial. Bread had long been scarce in the provinces, but in Paris the famine was still more severely felt. It was decreed that one pound per head of bread should be delivered to the people every day. Peculiar circumstances, evil influences, the fatal result of anarchy, prevented the

[1] From the fragment, *A mon délateur*.

execution of this decree. An unequal distribution, caused partly by ignorance, and partly by the roguery of some bakers who sold the flour and rice furnished by the Republic at a higher price through the connivance of the commissioners charged with distributing the food, were among the causes of this distress. Workmen, women, and children, had for the last year been spending nights and days, sometimes in vain, waiting for a few ounces of detestable bread. Meanwhile orators preaching sedition were dispersed among the crowds waiting at the doors of the butchers and bakers. Hunger and despair caused many suicides. This was the picture which Paris presented at this epoch. In some quarters bread of a superb quality was being sold at a very high price. It paid the bakers to make it for those who could afford the expense. I often explained to the poor, who cried out against this abuse, that the quantity distributed to them would be less if the rich were not able to buy bread outside their sections, but the suffering masses do not reason when their wants are concerned. They were indignant at the display of food which they could not buy, and against those who could afford to purchase it. Every attempt at consolation on the part of reasonable men was met by these words, 'It is easy for you to talk, you who have plenty.' There was therefore hatred on the side of the poor against the rich, because in spite of all its efforts the government was not able to supply this enormous population with bread; while

on the other hand, a very small number of rich people were able at the cost of its weight in gold to obtain bread of first-rate quality. For my part, I declare that I lived entirely on the moderate rations distributed in my section, that I never would buy bread at ten or twelve francs a pound, and that I gave orders not to importune the bakers for my share. We were once three days without receiving any in the house where I lived."

[1] The scarcity of food, although a very real evil, was not the sole cause of the agitation in Paris. There was a wide-spread conspiracy on the part of the remnant of the Montagne to upset the Convention and restore the machinery which had worked so effectually and despotically under the Terror. This party gained the co-operation of the masses by means of the famine. Disgusted with repeated failures, the conspirators resolved to strike a decisive blow. All the night of the 30th Floréal to the 1st Prairial (20th May) was passed in agitation. Women ran about the streets crying that the Convention must be attacked, that it had murdered Robespierre only in order to tyrannize in his stead; that it was starving the people and killing all the Patriots. They

[1] France was not the only country at this time suffering from dearth. Lord Stanhope, in his *Life of Pitt*, says—"The havoc of war had laid waste a great part of the corn districts on the Vistula and Rhine, and the harvest of 1794 had proved scanty in other parts of Europe. Thus at Paris 'Bread, Bread!' became the favourite watch-word, both of the poorer classes and of all who desired to overthrow the existing government. In England the price of provisions continued to rise; there was severe distress throughout the winter, and in the spring many a dangerous riot. Thus at Birmingham, in the month of June, a mob of a thousand people gathered before a bakehouse and mill, which they proceeded to break open and plunder, crying, 'A large loaf! Are we to be starved to death?'"

suggested that they should lead the invaders, as the troops would not venture to fire on women.

Soon after daylight the tocsin sounded, all the bells began to ring, and the mob starting from the insurrectionary faubourgs was increased as it went on by all the vilest rabble, by a few regular troops from the section, and by many rascals flourishing pikes and all sorts of arms, shouting, "Bread, and the Constitution of 1793!" By ten o'clock they reached the Tuileries. The deputies were already at their posts, and the galleries filled with (so called) patriots. Suddenly a swarm of women rushed into the galleries, pushed the occupants from their seats, screaming "Bread, bread!" so incessantly as to put a stop to all proceedings. Blows and hammerings at the doors of the Assembly were heard. The President's eye fell upon a general who had come to present a petition. He appointed him on the spot to command all the troops he could muster in defence of the Convention. Declaring that he was ready to die in its service, the general went out and presently returned with an escort of fusiliers, and a troop of young men armed with whips, which they cracked furiously as they rushed up into the galleries and turned out the women, who filled the air with their shrieks.

The noise at the doors redoubled. They gave way, and the crowd burst in. The Assembly became a field of battle between the gendarmes, the other supporters of the Convention and the insurgents. They levelled their guns against the President, Boissy d'Anglas, who sat immovable in his chair. A young deputy Féraud rushed to protect the President; he was cut down instantly and his body carried into the corridors. Most of the deputies fled, others retired to the topmost benches. The *Crétois* (this was the name recently given to the remains of the Montagne), who approved of the insurrection, took

possession of the bureaux, and passed, amidst the rejoicings of the mob, all the measures demanded by the insurgents. Boissy d'Anglas put on his hat and protested in vain. They brought in the head of Féraud on a pike and showed it to the President, who gravely bowed towards it with great respect. They touched his breast with their swords and pikes, urging him to pass the decrees, but he refused persistently, betraying no symptom of fear. The Deputy Romme made himself their spokesman; they appointed an executive committee of five members, demanded the return of their exiled comrades, the Constitution of 1793, and the re-establishment of the Jacobin Club. Meanwhile the commissioners from the Assembly had succeeded in rousing the sections, whose battalions were already filling the Carrousel and the principal approaches to the Convention, and, headed by Legendre and other members, charged the insurgents and penetrated into the hall. Legendre summoned the usurping legislators to retire in the name of the law. The battalions were streaming in from all the issues, and the rebels effected their departure with the utmost rapidity. It was now midnight, and by five o'clock on the following morning twenty-eight of the ringleaders were on their way to Cayenne.

The Convention spent the night in reversing or rather annulling the mock decrees of the Revolutionists. The deputies who had sided with them, Romme, Duroy, Rühl, Duquesnoy, and others, twenty-eight in all, were denounced. Tallien was now as ardent a Conservative as he had been a destructive in 1792. "Vengeance! vengeance!" he cried, "against the assassins of our colleague—all that remain of the Jacobins must be destroyed." His proposals were adopted, and as it was now three a.m. the Assembly adjourned.

Although Sergent said to his neighbour, while Romme and Duroy were speaking, that he considered these deputies as even more guilty on account of their position than the ignorant crowd, and also on the next day paid a tribute to the memory of Féraud in the Convention, he was unjustly suspected of having favoured the insurrection, and of having applauded the entrance of the mob. He eagerly defends himself in his *Memoir*, written in 1801, and in the fragment, *A mon délateur*. As he spent the whole day seated in his ordinary place in the Convention, or after the assassination of Féraud for some hours in the *Comité des Inspecteurs* (not from fear, but with other members to refuse all countenance to the proceedings of the rebels), he necessarily had an imperfect idea of what was going on. His narrative would not have been intelligible without the short account I have just given of this important day, which finally destroyed the Jacobin party and also put an end to Sergent's political career.

He writes—

[1] "Those who had lived all through the Revolution saw clearly that the rebels wanted, and were determined to effect, the extinction of the Convention. The 1st Prairial was fixed on for this purpose. As this catastrophe was made the pretext for my arrest, I will give further details.

"A member of the *Comité de Salut Public*, I think it was Treilhard, announced from the Tribune that at three in the morning the Committee had been informed that a troop of rioters was to attack the Convention. Without leaving my seat, I asked why

[1] Memoir, written in 1801.

the Committee had not, after receiving this warning, increased the guard according to the decree of the 12th Germinal. It was noticed that the galleries were full of women who refused to move. I was sitting near the Bar in front of the President. I could not see what was going on at the entrance. Tears were rolling down my cheeks when I heard that the mob threatened to break open the door. I own that I complained of the carelessness or the incapacity of the Committee who, knowing what had happened on the 12th Germinal, had not from the early morning guarded all the approaches to the National Palace; at noon no repressive measures had been taken. Did these complaints which I addressed to several of my colleagues prove that I was in correspondence with the insurgents? I was secretly afraid that the young fellows called *Muscadins* were alone charged with repressing the insurrection. Some hours had passed, yet only a few citizens had assembled to support the Invalides, the Gendarmes, and the Veterans.

"Shots were fired, and then I saw, following a small detachment of National Guards that had already twice attacked the rebels, a troop of armed citizens carrying the flag of a section and beating their drum. As soon as the front ranks had penetrated into the hall, I cried out, 'If the people are on our side we are saved. I am always glad when I see the Convention protected by every class. No one can then say that there are none but aristocrats and rich people here!

I scarcely had uttered these words when the crowd increased; three of the foremost rushed with naked swords against an aide-de-camp, another fired upon a soldier who was trying to protect the President; Féraud (a young deputy) was struck down while endeavouring to oppose their fury. All this passed with the rapidity of lightning, in less time than I take to describe it. The President was surrounded by four or five of these wretches, who threatened him with their pikes. I was standing up, but at this sight I fell back on my bench, exclaiming with anguish, 'Ah! how I was deceived; these men are brigands!' A veteran who was sitting next me said to me, 'Citizen, I have the experience of years, which you have not; remember this, you can place no reliance on a people without morals or religion. You see that these men have not come here with good intentions. . . .' I repeated that I had been cruelly deceived, that I had thought when I saw the flag that a section had come to our rescue. I left the Hall of the Convention after the murder of Féraud, and joined my colleagues in the Committee-room of the Inspectors, where I remained until ten o'clock at night, when the secretary came to tell us that all except the deputies had left the hall. We returned thither. As might be expected, accusations were used as weapons of vengeance. No one thought of accusing me. I did not conceal myself; I remained seated in the same place. It was proposed to examine the conduct of all those deputies

who had been sent as Commissioners with the armies. I never had been one, so I was perfectly easy. My mode of life, which I never changed, was enough in itself to reassure me. I never had frequented any of the leaders of parties—neither Robespierre, Danton, Marat, Gensonné, Guadet, nor Brissot—my name therefore had never figured in the reports of Girondin or Jacobin conspiracies. I never insulted by sarcasms or rude remarks any deputy. When insulted myself I thought it unworthy of the dignity of my position to retort. The nicknames, *Sansculottes*, *Muscadins*, *Honnêtes Gens*, *Modérés*, *Enragés*, *Federalists*, *Brissotins*, *Girondins*—words which have been used as swords by the opposite parties—will never be found in my speeches (see the *Moniteur*, which contains the most faithful reports), nor the vile flattery which has caused so much mischief. I never attacked petitioners or orators with threatening gestures or impatient cries. Firmness in my opinions, freedom in my votes, patience in listening to others, forbearance against injuries, kindness and sensibility in my own speeches —these were the only weapons I used against my adversaries. These were the reflections which passed through and tranquillized my mind on this eventful day."

Although the Convention had won, it was shaken to its foundation by this onslaught, and terror once more led to cruel reprisals. A military commission was appointed to try the deputies who had taken part in the mock debate of the 1st Prairial, as well as all who were involved in the previous disturbances,

all the members of the old Committees of Public Safety and General Security and all their principal agents. Rühl, an old man of excellent character, but who had ventured to proclaim his republican principles on the 1st Prairial, stabbed himself when he heard of his arrest. He was right, for his comrades obtained no mercy. Romme, Duroi, Bourbotte, Duquesnoy, Soubrany, and Goujon were condemned to death. They had two knives and a pair of scissors between them, and with these instruments they stabbed themselves on their way from the tribunal. Three died on the spot; the other three perished on the scaffold.

The reactionary massacres in the south were worthy of the worst days of the Revolution. There were two companies of *Jeunesse Dorée*, one called the *Soleil*, the other blasphemously assumed the name of the *Compagnie de Jésus;* they carried a crucifix as a banner, burst into the prisons, set fire to some, butchered other prisoners, threw women into the Rhone, and for all these crimes were never so much as reprimanded by the Convention.

Not being able to find any excuse for these horrors —the *Réaction Thermidorienne* as it was afterwards called—Sergent lays them, as he does most of the evils of the Revolution, to the account of the monster Pitt.

He writes—

[1] "In order to tear our country more effectually in pieces, the English inspired those who had been the victims of persecution to persecute others in their turn. One is tempted to believe that everything had long since been combined and arranged to raise agitations under cover of which a trap might

[1] Memoir, written in 1801.

be laid to catch some deputies whose enthusiasm for Liberty was well known. When I heard the address of the rebels read in the Convention on the 1st Prairial, I said to the Abbé Grégoire, who was sitting in front of me, 'Is it certain that this paper did not issue from the Cabinet of St. James?'"

He traces even the new patriotic hymn, *Le Réveil du Peuple*, to foreign powers.

[1] "This *sublime* hymn of the *Honnêtes gens*, the *Réveil du Peuple*, was a cry inciting to civil war. It was sung while French people were drowning each other in the Rhone at Lyons, while they were being shot down like wild beasts at Marseilles and Nîmes; it celebrated the heroism of those who murdered generals who had saved our country. I try to persuade myself that this poem was sent from London, or from some place in Germany. The English kept both our parties in their pay, and even forged our money like common thieves. Pitt owned in Parliament that he had ordered the manufacture of assignats, and justified the measure. Are not those sovereigns who are alarmed by our revolutionary movements interested in sending to France spies, clever, designing men, to increase our difficulties under the disguise of victims? The following were the words of a speech I made in one of the sectional Assemblies of St. Jacques l'Hôpital—'England, ever jealous of France, and waiting to revenge herself for the support given by our government to the American

[1] From Sergent's Introduction to his *Historical Notes*.

Rebellion, scatters her gold to stimulate the revolutionary movements which will lead us we know not whither. She hopes that we shall exhaust our strength in our excitement, and she is willing to sacrifice her wealth in rousing our passions. Who can tell if it is not by her agents that we have been induced to take up arms against our ministers and our Court? I wish that our people were able to throw a few millions into Albion to stir up an insurrection to keep her employed while we settle our own affairs in peace, for I distrust our neighbours greatly. How, indeed, is it that so many exaggerated proposals are made among us by men who have no root in our soil, who have no right whatever here, who cannot without imprudence be employed by us in any way? Our most fiery orators are often surpassed by them. The crowd which is led away by exaggeration adopts them and trusts in them blindly, and learns from them first to suspect, next to accuse, and finally to condemn, their victims even to the scaffold.'"

It is a comfort to think that these aspersions on our national honour were unfounded. Lord Stanhope writes—

[1] "Against the English Minister especially the violence of popular declamation knew no bounds. Even among the more moderate Girondins we find him designated as 'that monster Pitt.' But although the democratic rage against him continued in full force during the next few years, it is remarkable that the grounds of accusation were from time to time

[1] *Life of Pitt*, vol. ii. p. 199.

completely changed. During the Reign of Terror it was said that he had in his pay all the chief Royalists of France, exciting them not only to open resistance, as at Lyons and Toulon, but also to such evil deeds as the assassination of Marat. After the Reign of Terror it was said that he had in his pay all the chief Jacobins of France, urging them forward by dint of English guineas, and trusting by their excesses to cast more and more disgrace on the revolutionary cause. And so far as we can now gather, these opposite charges were received by the same public with an equal credulity."

Arrests were being made every day, and Sergent, although his conscience was clear, could not help (considering the unscrupulous actions of his political opponents) fearing that his turn was coming. A funeral service was ordered in honour of the slaughtered Girondins, proposed by Louvet, and Sergent was desired to organize the ceremonial. He had a presentiment that he should not be present. He said to Sieyès, "Perhaps I shall not be considered worthy of taking part in it." However, he worked energetically at the preparations. In his later memoir he writes—

[1] "One of the chiefs of the *Jeunesse Dorée*, a young writer called Isidor, an Englishman (who was afterwards sent to Cayenne by the Legislative Assembly when Pichegru was impeached), denounced M. Sergent as the author of the massacres of September. The accusation was carried to the Committee of Jurisprudence, where it remained buried for a fortnight."

Sergent received a timely warning of what was going on. He says—

[2] "An orator of the section of St. Jacques l'Hôpital

[1] Memoir, dictated in 1847.
[2] Memoir, written in 1801.

had been unjustly arrested by the Revolutionary Committee during the Terror, and brought before its Tribunal. I spoke to almost all the members in his favour, and saved his life. Well! he was now appointed a member of the deputation which was to denounce me. I was accused of having heaped victims in the prisons on the 10th August, and of having ordered the massacres of September. The reporter of the Committee added, in order that the decree of arrest might be passed without discussion, that I was seen applauding the brigands on the 1st Prairial, and that some one had read this in a newspaper! Fortunately I was dining at home on the 17th, for I was in a great hurry to go to superintend the architects and workmen who were preparing the *fête*, when the wife of one of my colleagues came to tell me that I was impeached. My innocence and my natural dignity prompted me to rush to the Assembly and claim a hearing. My friends stopped me by telling me that if I appeared there I should be arrested, for this had happened to all who chanced to be present at the sitting,[1] and finally they asked me if I trusted in justice at a time when every law was violated? This opened my eyes, I put on my hat and took refuge with some friends."

Sergent does not tell us how he managed to escape from Paris, or of his subsequent journey to Chartres. He writes—

[1] See *Moniteur* of the 17th Prairial, 1795.

[1] "Sergent was received and secretly introduced into the château of M. Tessier at Courville near Chartres, by the Chevalier de Rulhières, son of the Commandant of the Gendarmerie, who was massacred on August 10th by the populace. In thanking the Chevalier for this asylum which they shared, Sergent said, 'I scarcely hoped that you would have shaken hands with me.' The Chevalier embraced Sergent and said, 'I have always, ever since my father's death, done justice to you, and I am far from accusing you of having participated in the horrors of that period.'

"M. Sergent left the château in three months, because he found that his host had received a box full of proclamations from Louis XVIII. to distribute in the neighbourhood. He also knew that a baby born under the roof was christened Louis by a non-juring priest, Canon of Chartres, who was hiding in a cave in a forest near the château, and fed every day by the gamekeeper. Likewise he heard one day familiar voices, and looking out he saw passing, under cover of the hedge, four Parisians, whose contra-revolutionary opinions were well-known to him, and in fact two of them were afterwards condemned to death for taking part in the insurrection of the 13th Vendémiaire. One night after every one was in bed Sergent's host, pitying his solitude, was kind enough

[1] Memoir, dictated in 1847.

M. Noël Parfait passes over these three months spent by Sergent in a château near Chartres. It was here, and not in Switzerland, that he met the Chevalier Rulhières.

to come to talk to Sergent, who told him of his discovering the proclamations, and added, 'I read in them my condemnation as a conventionalist.' He replied quite seriously, 'There will be hanging, but no blood will be shed, and you will not be the only victim.' Sergent burst out laughing; he had saved his host's son from arrest during the Terror."

Affairs had not gone smoothly in Paris during the three months while Sergent was hiding. Each party was trying to get the upper hand. Several sections gained over by the Royalists resolved on another insurrection. The Convention gave the command of the armed force to Barras, who associated with himself the young engineer officer who had behaved with such skill and gallantry in the defence of Toulon—Napoleon Bonaparte. The measures adopted by him were so effectual that the insurgents were completely defeated. This was the affair of the 13th Vendémiaire. The Republic little knew that this victory was to prove its death-blow.

[1] "Sergent arrived in Paris on this day, and heard the first discharge of artillery on the road near St. Denis. It was this affair that earned for Bonaparte the name of the Hero of the Cul-de-sac, because the chief fighting took place in front of the church St. Roch, at the end of a little street called the Cul-de-sac du Dauphin."[2]

He rejoined Emira in Paris, and took advantage of the return of one of General Marceau's aides-de-camp (Marceau was in command of two divisions of the army on the Rhine), whose papers would, Sergent

[1] Memoir, dictated in 1847.
[2] Now called the Rue St. Roch. It is no longer a cul-de-sac.

says, cover their want of passports, to escape from France.

[1] "They reached Coblentz without difficulty. It happened by a singular fatality that General Jourdan's army was in full retreat, and had to recross the Rhine. Marceau did not venture to receive the fugitives, as there were four commissioners from the Convention watching the movements of the army who might have arrested Sergent; he confided them to the care of the Chief of his Staff, who took them across the bridge while the army was passing over it in the opposite direction. This officer gave a passport to Sergent, describing him as an artist, under an Italian name, took him to a peasant's cottage, and gave him, from the General, forty-seven louis, for Sergent had brought nothing but assignats. It was settled that he should remain in that village until the retreat of the French army had been effected, but, as it happened, Generals Marceau and Kléber were obliged to cross back again to command the troops which were on the other side, and Marceau came in the night to embrace his friend and take charge of his sister. Some one spied out the uniform under the General's overcoat, and on the next day M. Sergent was arrested by the Austrians, and taken to the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein. When they arrived at the fort the Commandant ordered M. Sergent to be brought before him. His name was asked and all his papers examined, and besides the passport signed

[1] Memoir, dictated in 1849.

by Marceau there was a letter from the General to two young ladies on whose house he was billetted, recommending Sergent to their care. This recommendation worked in Sergent's favour, for Marceau had been so merciful in his requisitions that he was liked even by the enemy, and for fifteen days Sergent was strictly guarded in a house in the town. As his presence had been reported to the Austrian General Clairfayt, he could not be set at liberty. He occupied himself in sketching and taking the portraits of the old captain and the grenadiers who had arrested him, and of the commandant, who with some of the other officers, amateurs of art, often came to visit Sergent and watch him at work. The commandant wrote therefore to General Clairfayt that the prisoner must really be a professional artist, and that there was no use in detaining him any longer. He was set free and went to Basle, where he was joined by Emira, sent thither by her brother under the care of an aide-de-camp."

Emira, in order that she might share his exile and poverty, now consented to marry her devoted friend and lover. According to the Swiss custom he added her surname to his own. This was an additional joy to Sergent, for it was a name associated with all that he held most dear. The French Minister Barthélemy received the exiles with open arms. They added to their slender income by exercising the arts of drawing, painting, and engraving. Among others Sergent engraved the portrait of the Princess Royal of France, the sole survivor of the prisoners in the Temple, and of the Archduke Charles. They had still something

to spare for those who were worse off than themselves. Emira sold two pieces of costly silk to give eight louis to a young emigrant officer who was in great poverty, and sent some of her own linen as well as the price of some valuable lace, which she sold on purpose, to two young French Countesses who were entirely destitute. Their exile soon became voluntary, for after the dissolution of the Convention a general amnesty was proclaimed. They were not inclined, however, to disturb the tranquil happiness they were enjoying, which must have been especially delightful after the trials and storms of the previous years. They took long excursions in the mountains, always on foot. On one occasion they walked a hundred and twenty leagues in a month.

[1] "Emira crossed a foaming torrent on the trunks of two trees thrown over it, as if she had been born and brought up in the mountains. I own I needed her encouragement to follow her. I could not do so when she walked over the Mer de Glace, for I turned giddy. She was the first woman to walk over the eternal snows of the 'Joch Pass.' On that day we walked ten leagues attended by four guides. The account is written in the book of the Benedictine Abbey in the valley of Engelberg."

These peaceful happy days were interrupted by a great sorrow. The young general so much beloved by Sergent and Emira, who was a true hero of romance by reason of his bravery, chivalry, and gentleness, was shot and severely wounded from behind a tree as he was riding a little in advance of his escort, reconnoitring a wood about fifteen miles from Altenkirchen. His soldiers made a litter of their muskets;

[1] *Memoir of Emira*, by Sergent.

they wished to carry him to the rear of the army, but he felt that he was dying, and begged to be taken to Altenkirchen. He suffered cruelly from the heat and shaking; the enemy continued to harass his little troop, and was repulsed with difficulty. Jourdan, the French Commander-in-Chief, came immediately to his assistance, and wrote to ask the Archduke Charles to allow Marceau to remain at Altenkirchen and yet not constitute him a prisoner, for the young general constantly repeated that he would rather die than be taken captive. The Archduke responded generously to this appeal, and Marceau was lodged in the house of the governor of Altenkirchen, and carefully tended by his two daughters. As is generally the case with men who have dearly loved a mother or sister (and Emira was both to Marceau), Marceau was fond of the society of women, and his chivalrous kindness gained the hearts of all with whom he came in contact. A story which has been magnified into a romance by more than one historian and novelist[1] was that of a young Vendéenne, a girl of eighteen, who was seized, arms in hand, after the Battle of Mans. The penalty was immediate death. She threw herself in front of Marceau's horse imploring for mercy. The general desired his adjutant Savary to take her to his tent, and in the evening he saw her again and ordered her to be removed to the house of an old and respectable curé. Unfortunately she was retaken and guillotined. Out of gratitude to Marceau she gave to the executioner a little watch as a souvenir for the general who had risked his own life to save hers. Sergent says that he often heard Marceau regret that he had failed in preserving her from such a dreadful fate. He saw her only for a minute on the battle-field, and again for a moment in the evening. These were the facts. On them was founded the fable that Marceau was desperately in

[1] Dumas turned it into a novel called *Blanche de Beaulieu.*

love with her and longed to share her tomb, and that on the scaffold she pressed to her heart a rose which he had given her. Sergent justly thinks that the simple truth redounds more to the honour of the young Scipio.

Marceau was so profoundly shocked by the butcheries at Mans that he became ill and was laid up at Rennes in the house of M. Leprètre de Chateaugiron, whose young daughter the Countesse Agathe (she was a Chanoinesse and therefore bore the title of Madame la Comtesse) and the handsome young general fell in love with each other. Marceau's fortune and position were not equal to hers, and her father forbade the marriage, but the mother favoured his suit, and the young couple considered themselves engaged. Marceau's rapid advancement and renown changed his prospects. M. de Chateaugiron gave way, and they were to have been married as soon as Marceau could obtain leave of absence from the army. He was to have picked up his sister and Sergent on his way to Paris, Emira was looking forward with the utmost delight to receiving him, little knowing that he was stretched on a bed of sickness never to rise again.

The two armies of Germany and France vied with each other in attentions to the young general. The Austrian General Kray loved him as a son; he had fought against him for two years, and yet had become his devoted friend. Marceau had promised to spend several months with him in the country as soon as the peace was concluded. When Kray heard of Marceau's mischance he ran to him, wept over him, sat by his bedside, pressed his hands, and tried to inspire him with the hope of recovery, but Marceau knew that he was dying, and although brave and resigned, could not help regretting the happiness which was so soon to have been his, as well as the brilliant career so

early cut short. The Princes of Hohenloe, Orange, Wirtemberg, Lichtenstein, and many others of lesser rank, surrounded his bedside. Archduke Charles, although he started as soon as he heard of the calamity, did not to his great regret arrive in time to see Marceau alive. General Kray wanted to bury him with military honours at Altenkirchen and raise a pyramid to his memory, but the French army claimed the remains of the young hero. The funeral procession, accompanied by an enormous military escort, commanded by General Kray, reached Coblentz at midnight on September 22nd, when the coffin was given up to the French general, but the Austrians begged to be told of the day of the funeral that they might all attend, and they proposed an armistice of eight days in memory of Marceau. One day only was granted.

The body was burnt in accordance with Marceau's wish. Statues and monuments were erected in his honour.[1] Byron sang his praises in the third canto of *Childe Harold;* a German poet, Schaller, composed a long funeral cantata (published by Sergent in his notice on Marceau), and the French poet Lescur dedicated a whole canto to the young hero in his poem, *Les Francs.* In his memoir of his wife Sergent says—

"We were waiting for Marceau to join us at Basle, whence we were going together to Paris to be present at his marriage with the young Countess de Chateaugiron. Emira was preparing his room when I saw his death in the newspaper.[2] From day to day I put off telling her. At length the Ambassador, Barthélémy, pressed me to do so. 'If she hears it from

[1] This very week (March 22nd, 1889) the ashes of Marceau and Kléber were removed to the Pantheon in Paris.

[2] September 30th, 1796.

any one but you,' he said, 'it will kill her.' I could hardly believe the news myself. I hoped that it was some mistake on the part of the writer, and it cut me to the heart to hear her talking of her brother all day, and making all sorts of provisions for his comfort. When at last I told her she fell into a sort of syncope; her eyes were fixed. I looked for the ring containing her brother's portrait and put it on her finger. She burst into tears. '*Ah! mon ami*,' she exclaimed—her head fell on my breast; I heard only her sobs. . . .

[1] "We had thought Marceau invulnerable. Although ardent and impetuous in battle he had hitherto escaped without a scratch. Like Achilles, he was wounded by a stroke in the dark when he did not know that he was running any danger.

"I was soon called to Coblentz, where his friend Souhait gave me the portrait of Agathe de Chateaugiron, which was found on Marceau's breast."

Marceau left twelve thousand francs to his Bonne Sœur, "whose name was the last on his lips," and three thousand to his young brother Auguste. This was all the money he possessed. Small as it was, Marceau's family disputed Emira's legacy, and in 1797 she and Sergent went to Paris, partly on account of this lawsuit, and partly because the old accusations of murder and larceny were once more brought up against Sergent. Great changes had taken place since 1795. Instead of the Convention there were two chambers of five hundred each; one called the *Conseil des Cinq Cents* (this was to prepare the laws), and the other the *Conseil des Anciens*, which

[1] From Sergent's Memoir of Marceau.

was to reject or sanction them. The executive authority was vested in a Directory of five persons. Laréveillière-Lepeaux, Rewbell, Sieyès, Letourneur, and Barras. Sieyès and Letourneur were replaced by Carnot and Barthélémy. Mr. Davenport questioned Sergent as to their character.

He replied that [1] "Laréveillière was an excellent man, but that whenever an error took possession of his shrunken and distorted body, there it was quite sure to remain, with no more chance of being straightened than the receptacle.

"Of Rewbell's honesty he had no opinion, from his love of money and the sums he had contrived to amass. Barras was a regular debauchee, but knew how to make a display of himself on horseback, and was tolerated on account of his good humour. Carnot's character stood high for honesty, morals, and general good intentions. Having always heard of Carnot's superiority, I thought I was not guilty of any sacrifice of truth in complimenting his son, who was present, by saying that I had always heard the first place given to Carnot's *rôle* in the Revolution. To which Sergent made no reply, but told us that he (Sergent) had been one of a Committee of Inquiry into the conduct of the men in power, in respect of their consigning innocent men by their signatures to execution. He observed that, generally speaking, the accused showed a shuffling spirit evincing consciousness of guilt. But Carnot acknowledged in a manly way that he had been guilty of taking the word of

[1] This is from a note written by Mr. Davenport in 1847 at Nice.

others and obeying the impulse of the times. 'I gave,' Sergent added, 'my vote in his favour because as Minister of War he had crowned the cause and the country with glorious success."

There was so much jealousy that the constitution provided for perpetual change. No one was to be a member of an Electoral Assembly for more than one year at a time; of the Legislative body for more than six; or a director for more than five years. No portion of the Government was to remain unaltered for more than a year. Experience was a disqualification. Constant plots and insurrections were the result. The Directory grew frightened and called for the support of the army and Bonaparte. He was gaining a series of splendid victories in Italy, and was by no means inclined to mix himself up in domestic quarrels, but he sent General Augereau with a powerful body of troops to settle matters. This he did by investing the Assembly with twelve thousand soldiers on the 18th Fructidor (September 4th, 1797), arresting fifty-three members, some were executed, others transported, and seizing Carnot and Barthélémy, the two members of the Directory who had not been informed of the intentions of their colleagues, and sending them to Cayenne. Carnot managed to escape before he got there, and Barthélémy, who escaped from Sinnamary to England, was called back after the 18th Brumaire.

The army now ruled Paris.

Sergent and his wife had many friends among the officers, for the memory of the young general whose career came to such an untimely end was dear to them, and Bernadotte, now Minister of War, offered to Sergent the post of "Intendant of the Army of the Rhine," or that of "Commissioner for the Superintendence of the Military Hospitals of the Republic."

He chose the latter, he says, as being more in accordance with his principles of benevolence.

Sergent had, however, taken too large a part in the great events of the Revolution to be able to live unmolested. Some months after his arrival in Paris the police instituted a searching inquiry into his mode of life. M. Maury, the distinguished keeper of the Archives, was kind enough when I was last in Paris to allow me to make extracts from the reports concerning him. He had asked to be sent as a member of the commission for the preservation of objects[1] of art in Italy.

The document is dated 13th Ventôse, An. VII.

"We beg to inform the citizen minister that the citizen and ex-member of the Convention, Sergent, receives a great many deputies. The Chief Inspector will try to find out his domicile."

Reply from Sergent to the Directory.

"*Rue des Poitevins, No.* 16.

"At the very moment when I am soliciting a post which may furnish me with the means of subsistence, I learn that calumny is endeavouring to destroy the interest due to my claims and position.

"I have received trustworthy information that your commissioner at the Department of the Seine has put me under the supervision (surveillance) of my municipality on the accusation that I receive anarchists. Among others, that I receive the Countess Agathe de Chateaugiron and a great many officers.

"It is true that the Countess de Chateaugiron (who

[1] The means generally taken was to carry them off to the Louvre.

is twenty-three years of age) comes every other day to weep bitter tears in the arms of my wife, Marceau's 'Bonne Sœur,' over the loss of the illustrious soldier, the choice of her heart, to whom she was to have given her hand after the retreat of the army under Jourdan, during which he perished. This citoyenne is devoted to his memory with a rare and admirable constancy. Her mother is often with us, as well as Generals Kléber and Dessaux.

"We *do* receive soldiers. Every time indeed that Marceau's brothers in arms come to Paris we receive them as excellent friends who do not forget the general's tender respect for his 'Bonne Sœur.' We receive in this way Generals Bernadotte, Championnet, Zardi, Sarrasin, Dessaix, Terreau.

"My wife sees oftener than I do Generals Chérin, Bournonville (a relation of hers) and Kellermann. These are our only friends. If I am denounced for my friendship with them I shall be guilty all my life. If the detectives sent to watch us are not rogues they will tell you that there is no one whom we see every day.

My wife and I have enough to occupy us in the heavy losses we have sustained, and especially in the deep grief caused by the death of the brother whom she brought up, and whom we both loved as a son. When therefore I told the Directory that I lived in solitude although in the heart of Paris, I spoke the truth, and had no idea that I should be put under 'surveillance' for holding a circle of Anarchists. I

hope that this explanation will neutralize the effect of the denunciation in the minds of the Directory, and that they will not suffer this accusation to prevent my being appointed a member of the Commission which is to be sent to Naples.

"Salut et respect."

Official Report.

"I have obtained all the necessary information regarding Citizen Sergent, domiciled in the Rue des Poitevins. I inquired of both parties. The one told me that he was a rascal, a Jacobin, and a drinker of blood; that he had intrigued some time ago to be elected a deputy, but had fortunately failed; that at present he was tolerably quiet, and exercising his profession of engraver; that if I wanted anything I had better not apply to him; that he had lost the confidence of honest people. The opposite party told me as much good as the other had spoken evil of him. That he was a good Republican who did not mix in politics; that he often went out with his wife; and that he carried on his trade of engraving, and that his conduct gave no cause for suspicion."

Bonaparte's rule was, "he that is not with me is against me;" he was only watching his opportunity for seizing the reins of government, and Sergent, with his staunch Republican principles, was not likely to prove a willing tool.

In the year 1799, Sieyès succeeded Rewbell in the Directory, and determined to make a decided change in the government. "We want a head and a sword,"

he said. Bonaparte was in Egypt, but his friends kept him informed of what was going on, and he offered his assistance to Sieyès, who willingly accepted. He left his army and came in all haste to Paris, where the Directory appointed him to command the military force. He ordered the Grenadiers under Murat to storm the Council Chamber and disperse the members. The Directory was abolished, and the power was put into the hands of three Consuls—Sieyès, Bonaparte, and Ducos. This was the famous Revolution of the 18th Brumaire (November 9th, 1799).

Bonaparte installed himself in the Tuileries, and set up almost regal state. Plots went on, however, and he was in perpetual fear of assassination. One atrocious conspiracy was very nearly successful. A rightly-named "infernal machine," consisting of a barrel full of gunpowder and other missiles, fixed upon a cart, and furnished with a slow match, was on December 24th, 1800, set in the middle of the narrow Rue Nicaise through which the First Consul had to pass on his way to the Opera. It fortunately did not explode until Napoleon's carriage had passed, but the windows of Madame Bonaparte's carriage, which followed, were shattered, and fifty-two innocent persons killed or wounded.

It was a Royalist plot, yet Sergent was accused, without the slightest foundation, of having taken part in it. He was arrested and thrown into the prison of La Force, *as a measure of public security*, so it was said. Emira went at once to Fouché, who sent her to Marshal Davoust, at that time Commandant of the Consular Guard. He was under great obligation to Sergent, for in 1790 he was sub-lieutenant of the Regiment Royal Champagne, whose cause Sergent had successfully advocated in the Constituent Assembly. The general replied coldly that he could do nothing. "My husband," she

retorted, "was not so calm when he extricated you from the citadel of Arras." "Madame," said the courtier, "at that time M. Sergent and I were fighting on the same lines." "General, M. Sergent has never fought on any other line but that of honour," Emira replied. In a few days Sergent was exiled.[1] He and his wife left France for ever, taking with them Emira's nephew, a little boy of four years old, one of a large and needy family, whom they adopted out of kindness, and who became the comfort of their declining years.

They turned their steps towards Italy.

[1] In one Memoir Sergent says that he was exiled in 1803. M. Noël Parfait also gives this date, but as they both agree that it was in consequence of the plot of the infernal machine, and that event took place in December 1800, it seems more probable that he left Paris in 1801.

PART III.—EXILE AND DEATH.

1801—1847.

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1801—1847.

Departure from Paris—Adopt nephew—Life at Milan, Verona, Padua, Venice—Lies to order—Emira's social qualities—Fondness for young people—Brescia—Pension granted to Emira—Poverty and industry—Nice—Death of Emira—Public tokens of affection and respect—Louis Philippe continues pension to Sergent—Mrs. Davenport draws his portrait—Death of Sergent—M. Carnot's speech at the funeral.

ALTHOUGH Sergent had passed middle age, and his active career may be said to have ended, he had still nearly half a century to live in this world, of which he was not weary in spite of the loss of fortune, position, and influence. His extraordinary vigour and energy never failed; his love for Emira and delight in her companionship were always fresh and vivid, and consoled him under every trial.

The lawsuit had eaten up a large portion of Emira's legacy, and they had a hard struggle to make a livelihood. They started from Paris in an open *calèche*, in which they put their little nephew and their luggage, and travelled themselves almost the whole distance to Milan on foot, leading the horse, for they had no coachman. Sergent had studied Italian with Emira in old times at Chartres, and it now came in very usefully. They had excellent introductions. Emira taught drawing to a class of young girls, and Sergent set to work at his engraving. They left Milan in 1804, and dwelt successively in

Verona, Padua, and Venice. Everywhere they were well received, but they could not succeed in obtaining enough remunerative employment. They stayed some time in Venice—it was at that time under French control—and Sergent in his Introduction to *Historical Notes* tells some curious stories of Bonaparte's "lies to order."

"In 1807 we were the masters of Venice. Eugène Beauharnais was Viceroy. Bonaparte sent thither M. Lajard as Director-General of the police. I often saw him at Venice, where I was living as an artist. One day the official *Gazette* announced 'that an English frigate had tried during the night to seize the island of Castelazzo in the Adriatic; that her men, who succeeded in effecting a landing, were promptly and vigorously repulsed by the Venetian garrison, and put to flight. Some escaped and regained their ship, which sailed off at full speed.'

"This island was visible from Venice. Hearing the firing, some officers belonging to the Marines and the Arsenal went up into the Observatory; some others climbed to the top of the tower of St. Mark, and watched the whole engagement with their telescopes, and saw that before daybreak the garrison was obliged to evacuate—that the English were complete masters of the island. I heard this from the lips of my friend, the Commissioner of the French Marine; and two days afterwards I heard an old officer belonging to the garrison relate that he had been obliged to swim for his life to a boat, which

took him up and saved him. This was the true story, the other was an utter falsehood.

"On another day, while I was sitting in the Café Florian (it was here that all the gay world of Venice assembled every evening for conversation till midnight), I saw in the official *Gazette* that an English frigate had had the audacity to sail into the Grand Canal in front of the Piazzetta, but that she was quickly chased away by a Venetian frigate to the open sea, when she was lost sight of, and had not reappeared. I left the *café* quite astonished that unless the authorities had gone mad they could permit such announcements. I met on the Piazza the Abbé Giudasso, proprietor of the *Gazette*. He was an acquaintance of mine. I had given him some articles on the French Theatre set up by Mademoiselle Raucourt at Venice, permitted and subsidized by Bonaparte. 'My dear Abbé,' I said, 'how can you venture to show yourself here in open day to your fellow-citizens after publishing such impertinent falsehoods? Look!—is not that the English frigate which we see riding at anchor all day between San Georgio and the Giudecca? Have we not seen her for the last week come back to this post every morning, after sailing away at night. Are you not ashamed?' 'No, my dear fellow,' he replied, 'it is nothing to do with me. I am not obliged to blush for the Government; they pay me for the articles they send, and I print them to *order*, as I did the article about Castalazzo the other day. The articles arrive all

ready-made from Milan. If I refused, my paper would be suppressed.' "

Sergent and his wife left Venice for Brescia, where they lived for seven years, and their fortunes improved. They were both of them very sociable. He writes—

[1] " Emira's greatest pleasure all her life was to surround herself with young people. In Italy she had always a circle of young friends, married and single. She presided at their games, and animated them by her wit and gaiety; at the same time teaching them how to behave in society, encouraging the timid, and gently checking those whose vanity might spoil their otherwise attractive qualities. At Brescia, where we lived for seven years, we had every week a party of this kind, and once a month a grand entertainment. I used to exhibit phantasmagoria and *ombres chinoises;* the speaking actors were my pupils and other young people. After this we danced till one in the morning. Girls not yet come out were allowed to come to these balls, and young married women of twenty, who were obliged by etiquette to wear none but white dresses and natural flowers, for which reason these parties were called 'M. Sergent's *Bals du Printemps.*' The day of Emira's *fête* was everywhere in Italy a triumph of friendship. For six years we lived in the country, about four miles from Milan; our merry parties, to which we gave no special invitations, consisted of sixty to seventy persons, who did not

[1] From Sergent's Memoir of his Wife.

leave us till daybreak. All who knew Emira in Italy, Switzerland, or Germany could testify that she never had any caprices. She was always pleasing and good-tempered, obliging and conciliatory; she never appeared tired or bored by her company, however noisy they might become. Not that she was indifferent to good manners, for one evening at Brescia a friend of Emira's, a Countess, brought to our house a young lawyer, who would not dance. Emira saw him in a corner lolling in an arm-chair, with his feet on another. She addressed him with pretended anxiety. 'I am so sorry,' she said, 'I did not know you were ill; pray go into the next room, where you will be more comfortable on the sofa—and if you want anything . . .' 'Thank you, Madame,' he interrupted, 'I am not ill.' 'I am glad to hear it, Monsieur, but your behaviour made me think you were suffering.' She begged the Countess not to bring him again.

"She was always charming in her attentions to her own sex. She took great pains to arrange her dances; her nephew and two other young fellows who were devoted to her were ready at a sign from her to dance with any girls who appeared to be neglected, while she looked after the mothers and aunts."

While they were at Brescia they received an unexpected addition to their slender means. A few days after the battle of Wagram, Bonaparte was visiting the wounded in the hospital at Vienna. Among

them was Maugars, who had been a companion in arms of Marceau. "What can I do for you?" asked the Emperor. "Nothing for myself," was the reply, "but I demand a pension for the sister of Marceau." The request was granted, and at the same time the Cross of the Legion of Honour was conferred on Maugars.

This pension (1200 francs) was enough to secure the exiles against absolute starvation, but not sufficient to maintain them and enable them to educate their adopted son; they therefore continued to make diligent use of their abilities. Sergent designed, engraved, and coloured a series of plates illustrating Ancient and Modern Costumes, with an Italian text. His reputation earned for him the honorary membership of the Athenæum of Brescia.

In 1815 Monsieur and Madame Sergent left Brescia for Milan, for the sake of finding an occupation for their nephew, who was now nearly eighteen.[1]

After publishing the concluding numbers of the *Costumi Antichi e Moderni*, Sergent gave himself up to literary work. In 1820 he published his *Notices Historiques sur le Général Marceau*, from which I have largely quoted. He would not accept any payment from his publisher, but he received a certain number of copies which he gave away to friends. Emira sent copies to the Archduke Charles, Marceau's generous enemy; to the King of Prussia; to the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, the Kings of Wurtemberg and Sweden, and to Louis XVIII.; to the Chambers of Peers and of Deputies, and to Lord Byron, General Foy, and other distinguished people. She wrote a letter with each copy. Sergent publishes three of these letters with their answers, from the Archduke Charles, the King of Prussia, and Lord Byron, all thanking her warmly for the gift, and

[1] He obtained a post under the Government.

full of praise of the young hero whose career had been so lamentably shortened.

In the following years Sergent translated some Italian works on art into French, and was appointed, in consequence, Assistant-Librarian of the University of Turin. He held this post until the year 1830, when he sought the repose due to his advancing years, and settled at Nice with his beloved companion. Their wanderings were at length ended.

Besides other friends, they found at Nice the Vice-Consul, M. Hyppolyte de Chateaugiron, brother to the Countess Agathe; M. Carnot, son of the celebrated Minister of War, and father of the President of the French Republic, was also one of their frequent visitors.

In 1834 Sergent had the inexpressible grief of losing his wife. He had adored her for sixty years, and to the last she was as attractive in his eyes as on the first day.

He adds to his description of her in early youth—

"Such was Emira at fourteen, and such she was at eighty, for she never changed. She died on the 6th of May, 1834, after an illness of twenty days, surrounded by those who loved her and scarcely ever left her, and who were touched by her resignation and courage. On that very day we entertained hopes of her recovery; she and I conversed for two hours, and then, at four o'clock, she expired in my arms without a sigh or a struggle—like an infant falling asleep.

"How could I help adoring her?—I whom she called by the proud title of friend—whose heart, unchilled by age, renders to hers the worship due to so much goodness.

"Although the charming form in which thy soul clothed itself is mingled with the dust, thy image, Emira, will be always with me! My imagination still sees it adorned with the beauty which rendered it so lovely in youth, and which time so long respected, and by the yet more powerful attractions of the qualities of mind and heart.

"A *cortége*, unusual in this part of Italy, followed Emira to the grave, headed by the Consul and Vice-Consul of France, and all the members of the Consulate, all the French residents, among whom were several military men, as well as by many Italians living at Nice. I bought the plot of ground destined to receive her remains, and intended to erect a slab over the grave, but on the next day I was touched by an address from some of our particular friends, asking leave to 'erect a monument to the memory of her, who for sixty years made the happiness of her bereaved husband—the sister of Marceau—whose fame shed a lustre on France. She will be regretted and mourned by all who honoured her while living, and her remembrance will never fade from their hearts.'"

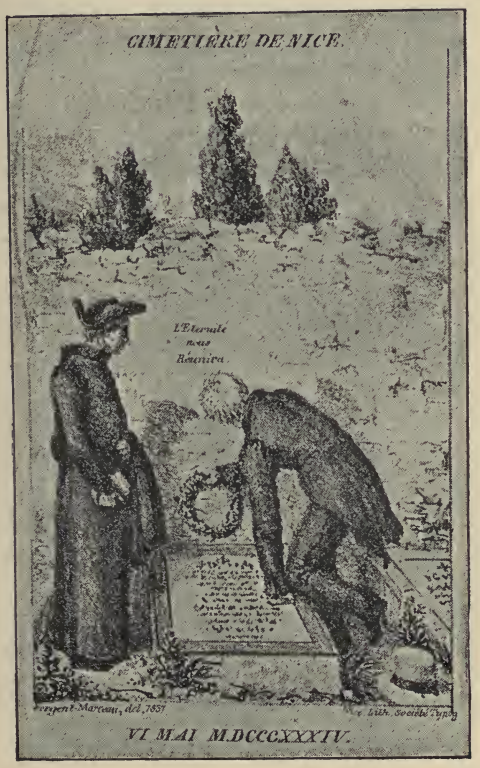
According to her wish, expressed in former days, a box containing the ashes of her brother was buried in her tomb.

Sergent concludes his memoir with these words—

"That resting-place will one day be re-opened for me."

Madame Marceau's annuity died with her, and Ser-

gent now found himself reduced almost to penury. It is to the credit of Louis Philippe that when he heard of the destitution of the old Republican he granted him a pension out of his own privy purse.



After his wife's death Sergent told their only servant that she had better seek another place. She refused to go away, and would accept no wages.[1] "I will never leave my master," she exclaimed, "not even if I have nothing to eat but dry bread; he was

[1] Memoir of Emira.

the husband of such an excellent mistress, I wish to mingle my tears with his." A peasant who cried "Good curds to sell!" about the streets, and brought some to us once or twice a week, was sent away by the servant; but she insisted upon coming, and said, "What! does not Monsieur take any more since we lost Madame! Oh, let me go on coming; I like it! I never shall forget her."

Sergent found some consolation in writing the little Memoir from which I have quoted so often (it was published in 1837); he also wrote long letters to his absent friends, and contributed some articles to the *Revue Rétrospective*, from which also I have made long extracts.

He survived Emira's loss for thirteen years, and in spite of grief and poverty retained his brightness and his memory to the last. Mrs. Davenport made his acquaintance within a year of his death. She says that she found him "uniformly cheerful; his apartment consisted of a large room with a tiny bed in it, the walls covered by pictures of the Revolution; this led into a little closet looking south, in which Sergent sat on a settee in the window, whence there was a magnificent view over the Port of Nice, making wreaths for his wife's grave. An alabaster urn on a pedestal contained some of the ashes of General Marceau, whose sword was suspended over it. A dress of Sergent's wife Emira hung upon the door."

It was here that Mrs. Davenport sketched the portrait which forms the frontispiece to this volume. The face expresses so much benevolence that one can hardly believe him to have been an actor in the terrible scenes which he describes.

In the following spring (1847), M. Noël Parfait says that Sergent became completely blind, and on the evening of the 24th July he expired, in his

Sergent Marceau
Orné 97 ans

ninety-seventh year, without any previous illness or struggle of any kind, the lamp of life went out.

He was followed to the resting-place he had chosen, and laid beside the remains of her whom he had loved so long and so tenderly. M. Carnot pronounced a discourse over the grave, the substance of which is contained in the following letter addressed by him to the editor of the *National.*

Letter from M. Carnot to the Editor of the 'National.'

"*Nice, July 26th*, 1847.

"Sir,

"We have just followed to their last resting-place the remains of one of the last actors in the great drama of the Revolution. The former member of the Convention, Sergent, died here on the day before yesterday, at the age of ninety-six, without any illness or infirmity, weighed down with years, which however had affected only his body, leaving him to the end in the enjoyment of an unimpaired intellect and an admirable memory. For seventeen years he lived at Nice, in poor circumstances, but surrounded with friends who were attracted by his witty, spirited, and playful conversation, full of piquant anecdotes. As for me, I owe many interesting hours to him; he was indeed a charming old man. He spent his time in engraving and occasional literary work. He wrote some autobiographical memoirs and notes, entrusted, I know, to safe hands, who will use them in conformity with his wishes. He had himself begun a letter to

M. de Lamartine, correcting some passages in his *History of the Girondins.*

"The affection and respect entertained for Sergent were manifested at his funeral; to comply with the request of some of his friends, I now wish, in the name of France, to make a public acknowledgment of his services.

"Our country owes everlasting gratitude to the brave pioneers of liberty; let us be careful not to let any one of them leave us without an acknowledgment. This is my chief motive for writing these lines. There is another, however—the fear lest the mental condition at the last of the old Republican should be misrepresented.

"Scarcely a week ago Sergent said to me—

"'The Jesuits, who you know are all-powerful in this country, have often sent their agents to me, and I own that they have always done me the honour of sending clever men, to remind me that at my age it is prudent to prepare for death. They insinuate that if it came upon me unawares there might be some obstacle even to my rejoining my dear wife in this world, as I look forward to meeting her in another. I always have answered that I would put myself right with the priests, that I would give them no excuse for refusing me this last satisfaction; but in reality they want me to repudiate my conduct in the Revolution. They have made indirect overtures to me, and would not be particular as to the form, if only they might say that Old Sergent has abjured

his errors. Old Sergent turns a deaf ear, because he does not think he was in error; because, far from repenting, he considers the part he took in the Revolution as his chief title of honour.'

"Sergent's last moments did not belie these words. The curé of his parish showed great forbearance and firmness. He is said to have kept away many officious visitors who came to worry the dying man; and to have answered the remonstrances of an important personage by saying—'I hope that at your last hour your conscience will be as well prepared as that of M. Sergent to appear before God.'

"Sergent therefore was laid by the side of his excellent wife, the elder sister of Marceau; she had taken the place of a mother to the brilliant Republican general. Her husband literally worshipped her memory to an extent which was touching to those who were capable of appreciating so much love. He adopted the name of Sergent-Marceau in her honour. He left Marceau's sword to the town of Chartres, of which they both were citizens, as well as his scarf stained with his blood.

"The above conversation gives a faithful portrait of the man, staunch in his political faith as were most of his colleagues in the Revolution. Included in a Consular decree banishing one hundred Republicans from France on pretence of complicity with the authors of the infernal machine, Sergent voluntarily perpetuated his exile. He would not take advantage of the amnesties or changes of government to revisit his

country, which had become successively an Empire and a Monarchy.

"Sergent-Marceau shared in all the glories and responsibilities of the Revolution. The only titles he claims in the epitaph composed by himself are these—

"*Member of the National Convention, one of the creators of the Museum of France and of the Bureaux de Bienfaisance in Paris.*

"(Signed) Votre tout dévoué,

"H. Carnot, Deputy."

Although so much has been written about the Revolution, it still remains an open question whether the advantages France gained by it over-balance the evils. Judging by our own revolutions it seems as if the necessary reforms might have been obtained without the wholesale destruction of life, the hideous cruelties, and the degradation of the name of Liberty, which was used to cover the most bitter tyranny that the world has ever witnessed. It is equally difficult to estimate the guilt of those who, like Carnot and Sergent, signed *de confiance* the abominable decrees of the Commune and the Revolutionary Tribunal. At any rate, Sergent deeply regretted these misdeeds, and no one can help respecting the energy, industry, and dignity maintained by him during the latter half of his life.

APPENDIX I.

The following notices are from the *Biographie Universelle*—

"Sergent [Antoine-François], designer, draughtsman, engraver, and statesman, born at Chartres, September 9th, 1751, died at Nice, July 1847. His parents, who were poor, were able to give him only an indifferent education. Urged by his artistic tastes, Sergent went to Paris, where he studied designing and engraving under Augustine de Saint-Aubin. He possessed a real talent for his art, and engraved a considerable number of plates both from his own designs and from pictures; he worked for the press, and applied himself with success to executing coloured engravings, which were much in vogue at that time. Sergent had just made a name in his art, when the Revolution broke out. The claims of justice and the rights of the people fired the artist with enthusiasm. The indignation which the abuses of the old monarchical society provoked in him, induced him to throw himself eagerly into the revolutionary movement. He took part in all the great days of the Revolution, became the president of a district, and member of the Jacobin Club, of which he was one of the secretaries, and where he became acquainted with the young Duc de Chartres, afterwards Louis Philippe. He undertook the cause of sixty subalterns and soldiers of the Royal Champagne, who

had been discharged for insubordination [September 15th, 1790], and succeeded in having them restored to their regiment. As municipal officer, and then as administrator of the police [1791], he played an active part on the 20th of June and the 10th of August, and after the taking of the Tuileries, he made an inventory of the objects found there [1792].

"The committee of 'surveillance,' having determined to sell the jewels which had been found in the palace, Sergent bought an agate valued at two louis. Some time afterwards, the Conseil-Général de la Commune disapproved of the sale, and Sergent restored the ring.

"On the strength of this simple action, his enemies, by an odious calumny, accused him of having stolen from the Tuileries a cameo worth one hundred thousand pounds, and tried to brand him with the name of 'Sergent Agate.' After the massacres of September, he signed the address which Marat sent to the Departments, urging them to follow the example set by Paris, and to 'purge the nation of a million traitors.' One would think Sergent bloodthirsty if one did not remember the number of lives he saved during the revolution, for example, those of the Abbé Barthélémy, Gossec, Barré, Larive, H. Robert, &c. He was elected one of the members for Paris in the National Convention, he voted for the death of Louis XVI., sat in the Montagne, opposed the Girondists, and defended at different times Marat, Pache, and Rossignol. He became a member of the committee of arts and of public instruction, and rendered great service in this capacity by protecting objects of art. By his suggestion, statues were placed in the gardens of the Tuileries; and he founded the 'Musée Français' [1793], contributed, with M. J. Chénier, to the foundation of the Conservatoire, which was then called the National Institution for Music; proposed a decree

in favour of literary copyright, and erected a statue to Jean Jacques Rousseau.

"A warrant was issued against him after the great day of the 1st Prairial, and he took refuge in Switzerland, where he remained till the amnesty of 1795. On his return to France, Bernadotte, the Minister of War, appointed him Inspector-General of the Military Hospitals. He was dismissed after the Attentat of the 24th December, 1800, and subjected to the domiciliary visits of the police. He quitted France, which had again fallen a prey to despotism, and lived successively at Turin, Milan, Brescia, Venice, and Nice, where he died at the age of ninety-seven. After the year 1830, Louis Philippe, hearing of his precarious situation, granted him a pension of eighteen hundred francs. Sergent remained faithful to his love for the republic till the end of his life. Through veneration for the memory of his illustrious brother-in-law, he took the name of Sergent-Marceau.

"Sergent (Marie Desgraviers Marceau), wife of the above, born at Chartres in 1754, died at Nice in 1834. She brought up her young brother, who became one of the most distinguished Republican generals, and she studied drawing and engraving with success. Her first husband was an attorney at Chartres—Champion de Cerruel. She shared the artistic tastes and ardent republicanism of her second husband—Sergent. This noble woman, who united masculine virtues with feminine tenderness, followed her husband into exile, worked with him, and was to him the most devoted of friends. She left behind her several engravings tastefully executed, and a MS. entitled 'Gleanings in the Field of Truth,' containing extracts from different authors and her comments on them, forming six quarto volumes."

APPENDIX II.

In Brissot's Memoirs he speaks of Sergent—

"I entered the office of the principal attorney in Chartres, M. Fureau, an honest man in spite of his profession, good and disinterested, but given up to petty practices and narrow views. He had fortunately a son, who was fonder of science than of law, and who cultivated with more zeal than utility all the branches of physical science. He gathered round him for the study of these subjects a few friends, among whom were two or three young men who have since figured conspicuously on the stage of the world. Boavet, a member of the Constituent Assembly, who would have rendered important services had it not been for his shyness and morbid shrinking from notoriety, and Sergent, who in the beginning of the Revolution seemed more eager for glory than for gain, but has deceived my expectations. Who would have thought, that saw him as I did, devoted to science and art, that he would one day abandon these delightful pursuits to signalize himself by such exploits? The soul of an artist should be incapable of cruelty and rapacity. He boasts, with many others who had nothing to do with it, of having effected the glorious 10th of August; but the results of that day are enough to cover his memory with eternal shame, even if that name were not engraved, with that of Marat, in ineffaceable letters at the bottom of the apotheosis of the massacres of September."

Sergent himself quotes this passage, and while he boasted of his share in the 10th of August, eagerly, and over and over again, repudiates the idea of having inspired, or even countenanced, the massacres of September. He says that the celebrated circular was altered by Marat, who appended his signature without letting Sergent know anything about it.

APPENDIX III.

Alterations Proposed in the Cathedral of Chartres in 1793.

"Citoyens,—

"Combien elle sera intéressante dans vos annales, cette époque où la raison, en parlant à toutes les ames, remporta la victoire sur le fanatisme, et détruisit d'antiques et absurdes préjugés ! Glorifions-nous, vous de vos arrêtés, moi de ce rapport que vous m'avez ordonné de vous faire. Ils nous feront plus d'honneur dans la postérité que les misérables et plates narrations de moines imbéciles, de fanatiques rédacteurs de parchemins. Ces prêtres, ignorants ou menteurs, ne nous avaient transmis que de ridicules rapsodies de miracles qui n'avaient été utiles qu'à eux ; et nous, nous donnerons à nos enfants à admirer les progrès de la philosophie naturelle et de la vérité. Ce miracle vaut bien sans doute ceux de saint Fulbert et de saint Ives, qui n'eurent que le secret d'enrichir cette église dont nous allons nous occuper.

"Mais, citoyens, la piété crédule de nos ancêtres nous a transmis un trésor précieux qui fera volontiers oublier leurs erreurs, et tant de siécles d'ignorance. Je veux parler de cet édifice superbe qui avait été érigé par eux pour la culte de Marie.

"La cathédrale de Chartres offre des beautés qui ont sans cesse fixé l'attention de tous les voyageurs, et attiré dans ce pays les amateurs de l'architecture

gothique. C'est, en effet, l'un des monuments de ce genre les plus hardis et de l'antiquité la mieux reconnue qu'il y ait en France. Il semble que la dévotion que les prêtres avaient su inspirer pour cette vierge magotinese, que nous avons fait brûler le décadi dernier, ait appeler et animé tous les artistes les plus célébres de ce temps pour construire cet édifice. Tout y porte le caractère de la perfection ; style, hardiesse de construction, voûtes, clochers, sculptures en tous genres, vitraux ; on y trouve tout cela réuni dans le goût d'alors le plus grand et le plus pur.

"Conservons donc avec soin ce monument! que jamais la hache et le marteau ne l'entament! Il sera toujours, pour Chartres, une richesse ; car il offrira toujours aux amateurs des arts, aux étrangers, un objet d'étonnement et d'admiration! Et, lorsque la liberté sera bien assurée, par l'affermissement de la République, devant laquelle bientôt tous les tyrans se courberont, nous verrons accourir de toutes les parties de l'univers des hommes qui nous apporteront encore leur or en venant prendre l'exemple de nos vertus, et nous enrichiront en venant s'éclairer. Nos mœurs, nos usages, nos spectacles, nos académies les attiraient en foule ; que sera-ce lorsque il trouveront chez nous la liberté, l'égalité, les institutions sociales les plus belles, et des fêtes nationales dignes d'un peuple puissant et plein de goût ?

"Avant de vous parler des légers changements a faire à votre temple, je dois vous entretenir, citoyens, des fêtes qui doivent nécessairement remplacer celles que la superstition avait consacrées. Nous avons abjuré une religion dont les pratiques et les dogmes concouraient à envelopper de nuages épais et grossiers notre raison, notre intelligence ; mais nous avons trouvé, dans ses principes, la religion sainte qui est née dans l'ame de tous les peuples. Nous avons détruit, renversé les autels que Rome moderne avait élevés par

les mains de mensonge et le l'ignorance, et nous commençons aujourd'hui à avoir une religion. Eh bien, pour y attacher le peuple, établissons aussi son culte, mais tel qu'il lui convient. . . . La simplicité, l'abandon, une aimable confusion, sont des caractères infiniment précieux, je l'avoue ; mais il ne sont bons et propres qu' à une petite société composée d'hommes qui sortent, en quelque façon, des mains de la nature. L'offrande d'un gateau de miel, d'une brebis blanche et parée de fleurs, d'une corbeille de fruits, sur un autel de gazon auprès duquel coulait un ruisseau, étaient des sacrificis infiniment intéressants dans l'enfance de l'espèce humaine ; on y assistait avec un respect religieux. Aujourd'hui, ce spectacle ne dirait rien à nos sens. Nos ames, accoutumées à des cérémonies pompeuses, théatrales à des représentations ornées de tout ce que les beaux-arts réunis peuvent offrir de plus magnifique, ne sauraient être énnues par ces scènes pastorales qui flattaient tant nos premiers pères.

"En effet, citoyens, avez-vous entendu battre des mains ; en signe d'allégresse, à la vue de ce spectacle vraiment patriarcal et politique que j'ai introduit dans la fête du dernier décadi, et qui, à Paris, ne produisit pas non plus, à la fête de la Réunion, tout l'effet qu'on en devait attendre. . . . Le spectacle de ces deux vieillards de l'un et l'autre sexe suivant une charrue conduite par l'aîné de leurs enfants, portant, avec les plus jeunes, de petites gerbes de blé et d'autre grains, a-t-il paru attirer et fixer tous les regards attendris ? . . . Non. Je parie que la figure de la Liberté, precédée et suivie de canons, s'est fait bien autrement remarquer. Nous ne sommes plus assez près de la nature pour ne parler que son langage dans nos fêtes nationales. Empruntons quelque chose à la poésie. Je vous demandrais donc qu'après avoir deux fois consacré le principe de l'égalité par la confusion

de tous les hommes, vous rétablissiez les marches pompeuses qui plaisent tant au peuple, qui y est habitué. Pour l'empêcher de regretter une chose, il faut la remplacer pour une autre qui ne lui soit pas inférieure. Ce qui flatte les sens l'attache.

"Chaque décadi, vous irez de bonne heure au temple pour y célébrer le culte de la Raison et de la Liberté. Je voudrais que l'on y marchât en pompe et avec dignité; que le peuple y conduisit ses magistrats, en les prenant dans le lieu de leurs séances; que ceux-ci y parussent avec le bonnet de la liberté et les marques distinctives de leurs fonctions; qu'ils eussent dans le temple leurs places reservées; car l'égalite n'est point détruite quand les fonctionnaires, réunis en corps, sont distingués des autres citoyens. Ils sont alors obligés eux-mêmes à garder une contenance qui donne le mouvement et l'exemple, parce qu'ils fixent les regards. Et puis il faut aussi que le peuple s'accoutume à voir avec une espèce de respect les magistrats qu'il a élus; car c'est de ce sentiment qu'ils tirent la puissance dont ils ont besoin pour gouverner d'après et au nom des lois.

"Une autre vérité que la réflexion vous fera sentir, c'est qu'un magistrat infidèle ou injuste craint toujours la présence de ses concitoyens. Il se croit en sûreté dans son bureau, parce que, de là, il commande à tous par la tyrannie qu'il exerce; mais son ame est troublée, il sent le remords, il est convaincu de sa faiblesse, lorsqu'il se trouve au milieu de ses égaux. Pour donner un frein aux magistrats, obligeons-les de paraître souvent devant nous, et, pour cela, qu'ils figurent en corps dans nos fêtes publiques.

"A côte des magistrats, qui seront élevés sur des amphithéâtres dans les temples, donnons une place honorable à la vieillesse. A Rome, à Sparte, à Athènes, le sénat, les archontes, les édiles, présidaient aux jeux, aux fêtes, aux triomphes, et les vieillards y recevaient

toujours des honneurs. Au bas de l'amphithéâtre où se placeraient les vieillards des deux sexes, seraient assis les enfants, que j'obligerais à se lever lorsque ces personnages respectables arriveraient. À Rome, quand les vieillards paraissaient dans les vastes amphithéâtres, tout le monde restait debout jusqu'à ce qu'ils fussent assis. Pourquoi les instituteurs n'ont-ils pas paru à la dernière cérémonie avec leurs élèves ? . . .

"De l'autre côté, un amphithéâtre servirait à placer les femmes encientes et celles qui nourissent leurs propres enfants. La mère qui porte dans son sein une intéressante créature qui sacrifiera tout, un jour, pour le bonheur de la République, est un être sacré pour la patrie. Honte et malheur à celui que ne sait pas respecter cette bonne citoyenne ! Déjà nous avons vu, à Paris, cette moralité si bien établie, que, dans les distributions de pain, qui se font avec inquietude et affluence à la porte des boulangers, on ne souffre point que les femmes enceintes prennent leurs places et leurs numéros. On les fait mettre à part, et le peuple leur distribue luimême les premiers pains qui sont délivrés. Dans nos cérémonies, nos spectacles, quand, au milieu de la foule, on aperçoit une femme dans cet état, on s'empresse de s'écarter d'elle, de lui offrir un espace assez large, jusqu'à ce qu'elle soit à l'abri ; et quiconque oserait y refuser serait maltraité et même arrêté !

"Au milieu de ces amphithéâtres s'élèvera une tribune à laquelle seront appelés tous les citoyens qui se sentiront la facilité de pouvoir dire des choses utiles pour l'instruction publique.

"Chaque renouvellement de saison pourrait être célébré par une fête dont tous les ornements seraient analogues. Par exemple, la fête de la moisson, pour l'été ; de la vendange, pour l'automne ; des fleurs, pour le printemps ; de l'amitié et de l'hospitalité, pour l'hiver. Ce sera le moyen d'attacher le peuple au

nouveau culte que de lui rappeler par des images les époques où la nature éprouve d'heureuses métamorphoses. Pour donner à ces fêtes un agreément, il faut que la musique en fasse le premier fonds ; mais que cette musique parle à l'ame, et dans le langage de la révolution, de la liberté ; que les morceaux respirent tantôt une ardeur guerrière, tantôt l'allégresse qu' inspire la liberté ; que les chants soient des hymnes patriotiques, des odes à l'égalité, des plaintes sur la mort des grands hommes. Paris vous fournira de ces morceaux, qu'on y enfante tous les jours. Vous avez des musiciens qui étaient attachés au culte romain dans la cathédrale ; il y avait des fonds destinés à les payer ; jusqu'à ce qu'un loi les supprime, ce qui, je crois, n'aura pas lieu, continuez les appointements, et que, tous les décadis, ils exécutent des motets civiques. Vous pourriez même—et ce serait encore les obliger à un travail inférieur à celui qu'ils avaient ci-devant —employer ces artistes à l'orchestre de votre théâtre ; ce qui ne les empêcherait pas d'exercer, s'ils le voulaient, un autre état ; et vous accoutumeriez le public à entendre de bonne musique, et à en prendre le goût.

" Mais, comme les bonnes mœurs et la sévérité sont deux caractères propres à les républicains, je vous engagerai à concourir à l'établissement des unes par l'autre, et à donner, de temps en temps, à vos fêtes publiques le ton qui pourra montrer la vertu dans tout son éclat et faire rougir l'homme vicieux. Pour cela, voici ce que je proposerais.

" L'inscription, à la municipalité, de tous les citoyens âgés de 60 ans et au-dessus ; l'impression et l'affiche de cette liste, pendant vingt jours, aux portes du temple et autres lieux publics ;—le décadi suivant, après la cérémonie, les citoyens éliraient, à voix haute ou par le scrutin fermé, dix de ces vieillards, qu'on appelerait le *Conseil des Sages*, et qui seraient choisis

parmis les plus instruits et les plus prudents ; ce conseil aurait, à chaque fin de mois, une place distinguée au milieu du temple, sur un amphithéâtre, pour y prononcer des jugements en faveur de la vertu et contre le vice. Ce serait eux qui distribueraient les récompenses nationales : aux citoyens, une épée, un sabre, un fusil, toujours égal à tous les autres ; aux femmes, un ouvrage moral propre à développer leur connaissances ; à quelques unes, le baiser fraternel. Toutes les familles alors s'intéresseraient à cette cérémonie et y assisteraient avec le calme et l'enthousiasme que leur en inspirerait le motif.

"Il serait pratiqué, dans un des endroits reculés du temple, une espéce de coffre ou tronc en marbre surmonté de la figure de la Vérité, dans lequel tous les citoyens déposeraient leurs dénonciations, leurs réclamations, soit contre les fonctionnaires publics, soit contre différents citoyens. Ce dépôt serait fermé par trois clefs qu'alternativement auraient trois membres du Conseil des dix. A la seconde décade, ils ouvriraient cette caisse redoutable et sacrée, enlèveraient les papiers qu'il contiendrait, les examineraient, et, après s'être bien instruits, avec toute la prudence dont ils seraient capables, de la vérité de les faits dénoncés, ils en feraient un rapport patriarcal, fraternel, sans passion et sans nommer personne. Ainsi, si un citoyen non fonctionnaire public s'était rendu coupable d'un de ces délits que la loi n'atteint pas, tels que l'immoralité, les mauvaises mœurs, le scandale public, l'ingratitude envers les parents directs, l'abandon envers les auteurs de ses jours, ou de ses propres enfants, tous ces délits qui ne sont punis que par l'opinion, le rapport qui en serait fait publiquement, et qui lui mériterait l'improbation du peuple, serait pour lui une punition suffisante.

"Mais, pour corriger les êtres faibles plutôt que méchants, pour les retirer du précipice en bons pères

plutôt qu'en juges sévères, les membres du Conseil ne nommeraient pas les citoyens qui auraient mérité cette censure. Leurs noms seraient cachés avec soin, à moins que, censurés déjà quatre fois, ils s'exposassent à l'être une cinquième pour les mêmes délits, auquel cas leurs noms seraient insérés au rapport. Etablissez ce tribunal, propre à ramener le regne de la vertu, des mœurs et de la liberté, et jamais il ne sera ébranlé dans vos murs. Que la fin de chaque mois soit consacrée à récompenser la vertu dans quelque genre que ce soit. Développez, mettez à la distribution des récompenses de la pompe, et vous attirerez le peuple à cette fête. Que le premier décadi du mois suivant soit employé par la censure du tribunal, et la curiosité y amènera la foule. Ce sont des idées générales que je soumets à vos lumières et à votre sagesse; mais pressez ces établissements; le peuple à besoin de fêtes pour remplacer son antique superstition.

"*Idées sur le temple.*—Je vous propose d'arrêter:

"1° Qu'il ne sera détruit aucun des morceaux de sculpture qui ornent l'extérieur de ce temple, qu'il importe de conserver à la postérité. L'histoire et les arts le réclament; 2° Qu'il sera fait défense à tous citoyens d'arracher ou de mutiler ces morceaux de sculpture; et qu'à cet effet, vous ferez peindre sur de grandes tables, à l'extérieur des portes, le décret du 13 avril dernier qui condamne à deux années de fers ceux qui mutileront les statues et les monuments publics.

"Il n'est pas moins important de ne pas détruire, autour du chœur, ces tableaux qui représentent l'histoire de Marie et de Jésus. Elevons-nous déjà à la hauteur où nos enfants seront placés. Voyons et montrons ces tableaux comme de vieilles fables qui serviront un jour à écrire l'histoire des religions, et aux artistes à suivre le développement de leur art. Il y a dans ces tableaux des morceaux qui offrent de

grandes beautés, qui font honneur à nos anciens maîtres. Combien je regrette d'avoir vu que déjà quelques unes de ces figures ont été abattues et mutilées par un esprit de vertige de quelques citoyens qui ont pensé qu'en détruisant les préjugés, il fallait en détruire aussi les traces historiques! Et où en serions-nous si les chrétiens eussent brisé toutes les statues et tous les bas-reliefs des païens! . . . Nous ne posséderions pas des antiques précieux qui nous attestent la sublimité du talent des artistes grecs. Détruisons les signes de la royauté; mais laissons à la critique et à la philosophie un point d'appui dans les monuments. Ordonnons donc que ces morceaux de sculpture seront conservés. Tel est l'esprit de nos lois, et telles sont les intentions de la Convention nationale.

"On peut abattre, par example, ces misérables chapelles qui forment le tour du temple, arracher toutes les grilles, les envoyer, pour fabriquer des armes, à Paris; elles serviront à repousser nos ennemis. Renversez les autels qui ornent ces chapelles; qu'à leur place on mette deux ou trois tombes en marbre et vos anciens autels de cette forme, celui de la chapelle de l'évêché, entre autres, qu'il faudra bien conserver, comme un ouvrage précieux; faites-les surmonter d'urnes en bronze ou en plomb, sur le pied desquelles on lira: *Aux mânes des défenseurs de la patrie . . . morts le* 10 *août . . . morts sur les frontières*, &c.

"Les grands bas-reliefs en marbre blanc qui ont été depuis peu exécutés dans le chœur ne valent pas la peine d'être conservés et déparent le monument. Leur travail est d'un mauvais goût, en outre que les sujets n'ont rien d'intéressant; car, si le mérite de l'exécution pouvait les sauver, je vous dirais: Quel que soit le trait historique de chacun d'eux, il faut le transmettre à la postérité. Mais, en les enlevant, vous en

conserverez deux qui, reposés par derrière, vous serviront à faire graver la sublime déclaration des Droits de l'homme, et sur une autre les époques célèbres de la Révolution: *La Bastille conquise, le* 14 *Juillet*, 1789. *La famille royale amenée à Paris, le* 6 *Octobre. Trahison de Louis, fuite à Varenne, le* 21 *Juin*, 1791. *La République Française une et indivisible, le* 21 *Septembre. Supplice du dernier tyrant, le* 21 *Janvier*, 1793. *Conspiration contre l'unité, vengée les* 31 *Mai et* 2 *Juin.* Ces deux tables de marbre seraient placées dans le bas du temple, à côté des piliers où étaient autrefois les bénitiers, et mises à portée des citoyens pour qu'ils pussent les lire.

"Au milieu du temple, entre les deux bras de la croisée, on fera élever une tribune en pierre, d'une belle forme, pour les orateurs. On se servira, pour cela, des deux lourds massifs en pierre qui ferment l'entrée du chœur (construction moderne). Les quatres figures qui y sont placées, avec de légers changements, deviendront des vertus républicaines. L'Humanité, que l'une d'elles représente, est déjà celle qui doit nous convenir; cette Humanité, qui foule aux pieds une couronne, deviendra en nos mains l'Egalité; nous lui donnerons un niveau. La Religion sera ornée d'une pique et d'un bonnet, et nous en ferons la Liberté, ou d'un miroir, et ce sera la Vérité. L'Espérance sera transformée, par un nouveau trône, en la deésse du Commerce;—et voilà nos vertus. On montera à cette tribune par deux escaliers en pierre. Des deux côtés, contre les gros piliers, seront éléves les amphithéâtres pour les vieillards et les femmes. Derrière, adossés aux deux autres piliers, seront placés, d'un côté les musiciens, de l'autre les autorités.

"Nous ouvrons le chœur; il sera accessible comme la nef. Plus de grille; elle ira aussi se transformer en fusils, en piques et en sabres; et ses ferrures en feront la monnaie qu'on doit appeler *décimes.*

"Les bas-reliefs de marbre, et les stalles ôtées, nous percerons à jour, entre les piliers, en abattant ces petits massifs qui sont au-dessus des tableaux sculptés de l'histoire de Marie et de Jésus. Il n'y a rien de très precieux à conserver dans cette partie intérieure du chœur jusqu'au sanctuaire (vieux style); nous l'abandonnons donc au marteau,—mais il faudra conserver le tour extérieur du sanctuaire avec beaucoup de soin, parce qu'il y a des choses étonnantes en sculpture, et d'un goût qui fait presque honte à notre siècle!

"Quant à la figure de l'Assomption (vieux style), il faut appeler le sculpteur qui l'a formée, pour y faire les changements nécessaires, et n'en confier le soin, à son refus, qu'à un habile homme. Ce morceau doit être respecté par tous les hommes médiocres qui voudraient, disons mieux, qui oseraient y toucher. Songez qu'il appartient à la République, qu'elle a intérêt qu'il reste sans tache, et qu'un ignorant lui ôterait tout son prix!

"Voilà, citoyens, un aperçu des changements que vous pourrez faire à votre temple, qui seront peu côuteux, que vous pourrez faire promptement. Je les résume:

"1° Détruire toutes les chapelles; 2° envoyer les grilles à la fabrique d'armes; 3° ménager la sculpture tant intérieure qu'extérieure; 4° abattre ce qui a été rapporté entre les piliers du chœur, depuis le bas jusqu'au sanctuaire, pour faire des ouvertures dans le genre des deux portes latérales; 5° ne laisser que l'histoire de Marie et de Jésus autour du chœur, et la sculpture autour de la sanctuaire; 6° laisser les deux autels en tombeau des deux côtés de la croisée, et abattre les colonnes qui formaient des autels; les remplacer sur le mur tout un, par une urne avec une inscription; 7° faire poser dans la chapelle du fond l'autel de l'évêché, avec une urne; 8° enlever les bas-

reliefs en marbre blanc, qui sont mauvais ; 9° faire construire, avec les deux massifs du devant du chœur une tribune aux harangues à l'ántique ; 10° faire placer dans le bas du temple deux tables de marbre où seront gravés les droit de l'homme, et les époques de la Révolution ; 11° faire placer au-dessus de ces amphithéâtres deux figures en albâtre que j'ai trouvées à Saint-Père ; l'une représentera la Fécondité, et sera au-dessus de l'amphithéâtre des femmes ; l'autre, la Sagesse, et sera au-dessus de celui des vieillards ; 12° dans une des chapelles, on placera un piédestal en marbre ou sera posée la figure de la Vérité ; et ce sera dans ce piédestal que les citoyens déposeront les pièces qui serviront au tribunal des Sages."

"Le Conseil-Général adopte unaninement le projet du citoyen Sergent, lui en témoigne sa reconnaissance par des applaudissements, en ordonne la mention honorable dans son procès-verbal, et arrête l'impression du dit rapport.

"Et, pour l'exécution du dit projet, arrête qu'il va être nommé une commission de quatre membres qui s'adjoindront les artistes qu'ils jugeront convenable.

"Le bureau propose et l'assemblée accepte pour commissaires les citoyens Périer, Malin, Sainsot et Chambrette." (*Delibérations du Conseil-Général d'Eure-et-Loir*, 3° *régistre, pages* 207 *et suivantes.*)

APPENDIX IV.

List of Sergent's Works, from M. Parfait's Notice.

"*Christ en croix; La Vierge et la Trinité;* sujets gravés, pour le missel de Chartres, en collaboration avec Biosse.—*Vues de la cathédrale de Chartres,* 4 planches, pour le bréviaire du diocèse, imprimé in-8° et in-12 en 1783.—*Vue de l'abside de l'église Saint André de Chartres.*—*Il est trop tard,* scène villageoise, gravée en couleur.—*Vues des châteaux et des principales habitations de Paris et de ses environs,* planches coloriées.—*Portraits des personages célebres et sujets memorables de l'Histoire de France.* Paris, 1787-1789, in-folio, 25 planches coloriées (Emira en a gravé quelques-unes sur les dessins de Sergent).—*Tableaux des révolutions de Paris depuis* 1789, avec un précis historique imprimé par les enfants aveugles. (J'ai trouvé 4 de ces estampes; j'ignore s'il en a paru davantage.)—*Portrait en pied du Général Marceau,* gravure en couleur.—*Portrait du même en noir.*—Ses *Funérailles,* gravure à l'aquatinta.—*Tableau de l'univers et des Connaissances humaines,* gravures coloriées; in 8° oblong: Milan, 1802. (Quelques livraisons seulement ont paru.)—*Costumi di popoli antichi e moderni;* Brescia e Milano; in 4° de 300 pages, orné de 23 planches.—*Notices historiques sur le Général Marceau;* Milan, 1820; in-8° et in-12, contenant 7 gravures.—*Iconologie* de Pistrucci; traduction française; Milan,

1821.—*Monuments du musée Chiaramonte*, par Ph. Aur. Visconti, traduction; Milan, 1822.—*Portrait d'Emira*, en buste, gravure coloriée ; *Détails historiques sur les diamants de la couronne volés et retrouvés en* 1792.—*Revue Rétrospective* (1re série, tome iv.).—*Relation de la journée du* 17 *juillet*, 1791 (*ibid.* tome v.).—*Projets républicains de quelques émigrés français* (*ibid.* 2° série, tome 1er).—*Relation des événements du* 10 *août*, 1792, *et des* 20 *et* 21 *juin précédents* (*ibid.* tome iii.).—*Notice sur le Général Marceau* (*ibid.* tome iv.).—*Emira et Marceau enfant*, tableau à la gouache. —*Fragment de mon album et nigrum*, Briquolles, 1837 ; in-8°, avec portrait, facsimile et sujets lithographies. —*Lettre à M. Didron, secrétaire du comité des arts et monuments*, brochure in-12 de 16 pages; Chartres, 1839.—*La bonne petite fille et le ramoneur*, histoire véritable, brochure in-8° de 16 pages, traduite du journal italien.—*Letture di famiglia;* Chartres, 1844. (Le sujet de cette histoire est une aventure de la jeunesse d'Emira.)

"Madame Sergent, outre ses ouvrages de gravures, a laissé 6 volumes in-8°, intitulés: *Glanures dans le champ de la vérité.* Ce sont des extraits commentés des livres de science et de philosophie qu'elle avait lus."

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THE FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW is published on the 1st of every month, and a Volume is completed every Six Months.

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THE FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW *is published at 2s. 6d.*

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CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS,] [CRYSTAL PALACE PRESS.

Author Sergent, Antoine François
Title Reminiscences of a regicide.
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